Bengaluru Monday, November 17, 2025 Pages 12 Vol 78 No 317 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

SC quota: CJI Gavai backs exclusion of creamy layer

Says children of IAS officer can't be compared to those of poor labourer

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Trump bought at least $82 m in bonds in 5 weeks

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SBI backs another wave of bank mergers

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Nation

3 Naxals killed in encounter P.10

World

Russia, US discussing Ukraine settlement P.11

NIA arrests key conspirator in Red Fort car blast case

Suspect Ali held in Srinagar; NIA terms Nabi suicide bomber

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Security personnel guard a road leading to Nowgam police station, where an explosion occurred late Friday night. PTI

TERROR TENTACLES

Investigators uncover network of radicalised professionals who allegedly planned a series of high-impact attacks across states

■ The arrested Amir Rashid Ali, a resident of Samboora in Pampore, had travelled to Delhi last year	■ Investigators believe Umar and Amir Rashid Ali had been in touch for months, quietly assembling the logistics for the November 10 attack	■ Module also scouted for a suicide attacker – an element they considered essential to stage high-impact operations	■ At least one young recruit approached for the role is understood to have backed out months ago, citing financial stress and religious hesitation

The Red Fort car bomb blast investigation has entered a decisive phase with the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arresting a key Kashmiri conspirator and uncovering a network of radicalised professionals who allegedly planned a series of high-impact attacks across states, officials said.

The NIA also described Dr Umar Un Nabi, the driver who perished in the Red Fort blast as a "suicide bomber".

The anti-terror probe agency on Sunday arrested Amir Rashid Ali, a resident of Samboora in Pampore.

"NIA investigations had revealed that the accused, a resident of Samboora, Pampore in Jammu and Kashmir, had conspired with the alleged suicide bomber, Umar Un Nabi, to unleash the terror attack. Amir had come to Delhi to facilitate the purchase of the car which was eventually used as a vehicle-borne IED to trigger the blast," the NIA statement on Sunday said.

Forensic analysis has confirmed that the driver who perished in the blast was Nabi, a young Pulwama-based medical professional working as an Assistant Professor at Al-Falah University in Faridabad.

Investigators believe the two had been in touch for months, quietly assembling the logistics for the November 10 attack that killed 13 people and injured 32 others near the Red Fort in the national capital.

What began as the terror poster case in mid-October has now widened into an unprecedented case of radicalisation among medical professionals, with agencies saying that the module operated with academic identities by day and plotted terror logistics by night.

▸ NIA, Page 4

India spun in their own backyard again

South Africans claim their first Test win in India in 15 years

MADHU JAWALI
KOLKATA, DHNS

In just over eight sessions, India crashed to a 30-run defeat, handing South Africa their first Test win in 15 years on Indian soil. The win in "un-South African" conditions would have lifted Temba Bavuma and Co's morale as much as it would have left the Indians in a state of chaos and confusion going into the series decider in Guwahati which is an unknown entity being the newest addition to India's Test venues.

The "under-prepared' pitch — as claimed by former India captain and Cricket Association of Bengal president Sourav Ganguly — came back to haunt India as it has a few times in recent times. Under Head Coach Gautam Gambhir alone, this is India's third loss on a pitch that has offered excessive turn.

While one hoped India would have learnt from their experience against New Zealand last year when they suffered a 0-3 whitewash, in which the last two Tests had rank turners, the result of the opening Test at Eden Gardens proved otherwise.

South Africa's Simon Harmer celebrates after the wicket of Rishabh Pant at Eden Gardens, Kolkata, on Sunday. PTI

Gambhir tried to defend the nature of the pitch, claiming it wasn't as difficult as the Indian batters made it out to be. He may be true also to an extent, but repeated losses in similar conditions suggest the current crop isn't as well equipped to negotiate the turning ball as he would like to believe.

Or it could be a case of unpredictable bounce and inconsistent turn which render a batter's technique irrelevant and make it more of a lottery as their second innings batting reflects. It lasted no more than 35 overs during which India struggled their way to 93 in a chase of 124.

India should have a serious deliberation on the strategy they want to go about going forward. Losing isn't uncommon but not learning from setbacks is unwise.

Speculations over, preparations on for Nitish's swearing-in

ABHAY KUMAR,
PATNA

Putting all speculations to rest, Nitish Kumar will be sworn in as the next chief minister of Bihar in the next few days. The swearing-in will take place either on Wednesday or Thursday depending on the availability of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is likely to attend the ceremony as the ruling alliance performed beyond all predictions to score an election landslide.

High-level sources in the NDA said the swearing-in will be attended by the PM, Home Minister Amit Shah, other Union ministers and chief ministers of NDA-ruled states.

"Instead of Raj Bhavan, the swearing-in of Nitish and his ministers is likely to take place at the historic Gandhi Maidan," said one of the sources, adding that the consultations related to power-sharing are going on between the JD (U) and the BJP in New Delhi.

The source, who is a senior NDA leader, said Nitish too is involved in the talks.

▸ Nitish, Page 4

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar being congratulated by Deputy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha, in Patna, on Sunday. PTI

Outburst of Lalu's daughter

Claiming that she was "cursed at" for donating a "dirty kidney" to her father, RJD patriarch Lalu Prasad, in exchange for money and a party ticket, Rohini Acharya, in a series of emotional tweets on Sunday, said "she has been made an orphan".
Details on Page 5

Tunnel road: Only 2 out of 4 bidders likely to qualify

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

Despite receiving four bids on paper, Bengaluru's 16.74-km tunnel road project may effectively become a two-player race.

Going by the tender conditions placed by the Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Ltd (B-SMILE), strict safety and financial criteria could eliminate at least two bidders from contention.

TUNNEL TANGLE

Last week, major infrastructure companies such as the Adani Group, Dilip Buildcon, Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) and Vishwa Samudra Engineering submitted bids for the north–south twin-tube tunnel road project, even as many of India's top tunnelling contractors chose not to participate in the Rs17,800-crore tender.

Notably absent were firms with the strongest track record in tunnel boring and metro-underground work, including Larsen & Toubro (L&T), Afcons, Hindustan Construction Co (HCC) and Tata Projects, which have handled high-risk, geology-intensive projects similar to the one proposed in Bengaluru.

LUKEWARM RESPONSE

- Four bidders: Adani Group, Dilip Buildcon, Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) and Vishwa Samudra Engineering
- Strict safety, financial criteria could eliminate at least two of them
- Many well-known engineering firms chose not to bid
- Experts say limited private-sector confidence in the project

Among the four bidders who did participate, Dilip Buildcon Limited (DBL) faces a direct challenge with Clause 2.2.1(g) of the tender, which disqualifies any entity — including Special Purpose Vehicles, subsidiaries or affiliates — that has a record of collapse of a bridge, flyover, tunnel, viaduct or metro span in the past five years.

In July 2021, a span of the under-construction Anakapalli flyover in Andhra Pradesh — being built by DBL's subsidiary Anandapuram Anakapalli Highways Ltd — collapsed, killing two workers. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) later imposed a Rs 3-crore penalty, which the company disclosed in a BSE filing.

▸ Tunnel, Page 4

DKS meets Kharge, raises leadership issue

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Deputy CM D K Shivakumar on Sunday met Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge and is learnt to have raised the change of leadership issue in Karnataka.

A strong contender for the chief minister's post, Shivakumar along with his brother, former MP D K Suresh, met Kharge here.

Though Shivakumar refused to speak to the media, sources in the Congress told *DH* that he raised the leadership change issue with Kharge.

Details on Page 4

RSS Chittapur march passes off peacefully

KALABURAGI, DHNS: The route march taken out by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) passed off peacefully amid tight police security in Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge's home turf of Chittapur on Sunday.

The high court had given conditional permission for the event. The row had flared up after the tahsildar had denied the permission last month citing possible law and order problems and the government's decision to restrict the event on the premises of government land and other public places.

Swayamsevaks marched for a few kilometres.

Details on Page 4

Priyank keeps up offensive, Page 4

QUARRY DISASTER

Rescue operations underway after a portion of a stone quarry collapsed in Sonbhadra, UP. Around 10 people are feared trapped, and three bodies have been recovered so far. PTI

BMRCL to prepare DPR for Bengaluru-Tumakuru metro

BENGALURU, DHNS: Setting the ball rolling for building a mass rapid transit system between Bengaluru and Tumakuru, Namma Metro on Sunday floated tenders for preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the 59.6-km corridor starting at Madavara.

This line is estimated to cost Rs 20,896 crore with 27 stations, including two planned for the future.

According to BMRCL, the Madavara-Nelamangala section will have stations spaced 1-2 km apart, while the stretch from Nelamangala to Tumakuru may get a station every 4-5 km. Given the cost, the project may be taken up by under PPP, BOT, DFBOT, DBFOT or the Developer Finance Model.

Details on Page 3

Cong calls meeting of state unit heads on SIR

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Congress has called a meeting of party leadership in 12 states and Union Territories where the SIR of electoral rolls is progressing on Tuesday to review the developments, amid plans to intensify its protest against the Election Commission on 'vote chori'.

Presidents of state and UT units, Legislature Party leaders, in-charges and AICC secretaries assigned to these places have been called to Delhi for the meeting at Indira Bhavan, the party headquarters, here on November 18 at 10.30 am.

The Congress leadership is expected to review the exercise in these states and UTs where the distribution of enumeration forms have started on November 4, with the EC saying that 49.73 crore or 97.52% of 50.91 crore enumeration forms have been distributed till Sunday 3 pm.

The leaders will be briefing the high command about the exercise in their respective states, the monitoring mechanism they have set up and how they are involved at the ground level in ensuring that voters are helped.

The Opposition has raised objections to the SIR, especially in poll-bound states such as West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, besides other places. However, most parties are cooperating with it as they believe that their absence would give their opponents a leeway in the preparation of final voter list.

'SIR stress': BLO ends life

A booth level officer involved in Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Kerala reportedly ended his life owing to work pressure. Aneesh George, 41, who was working as a peon at a school, was found dead at his house near Payyannur in Kannur district on Sunday.
Details on Page 5

BIG CON

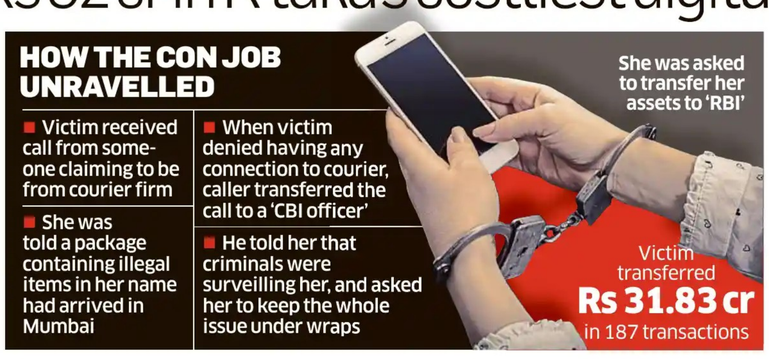
Techie loses Rs 32 cr in K'taka's costliest digital-arrest scam

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

A 57-year-old Bengaluru woman was conned out of a staggering Rs 31.83 crore over six months — the largest amount lost by a single victim in Karnataka in the infamous 'digital arrest' scam, police said.

The victim, a resident of Indiranagar and a "very senior-level IT professional", was placed under constant surveillance by cybercriminals for over six months before they abruptly cut contact, a senior cybercrime investigator told *DH*.

On September 15, 2024, she received a call from someone claiming to be from DHL, a courier service. She was told a package in her name — containing three credit cards, four passports and MDMA drugs — had arrived at the DHL centre in Mumbai.


HOW THE CON JOB UNRAVELLED
Victim received call from someone claiming to be from courier firm
She was told a package containing illegal items in her name had arrived in Mumbai
When victim denied having any connection to courier, caller transferred the call to a 'CBI officer'
He told her that criminals were surveilling her, and asked her to keep the whole issue under wraps
She was asked to transfer her assets to 'RBI'
Victim transferred
Rs 31.83 cr
in 187 transactions

When she said she had no connection to it, the caller claimed it could be a cybercrime since her phone number was linked to the package. She was asked to report the matter to the cybercrime cell. Before she could respond, the call was transferred to a person posing as a CBI officer.

"It was a horrifying experience for me, going through their threats," she later told the police. The fraudsters warned her against contacting the police, saying the "criminals" who had misused her identity were surveilling her. They also threatened to implicate her family if she informed them. Fearing repercussions and with her son's wedding approaching, she heeded their demands.

DIGITAL DACOITS

▸ Digital arrest, Page 4

Quickly

Ladakh bodies table restructured demands

Nearly two months after Leh was rocked by deadly violence, Ladakh's two powerful civil society blocs, the LAB and the KDA, have shifted from street pressure to structured negotiation.
Details on Page 10

MP minister calls Raja Ram Mohan Roy a 'British Agent'

Madhya Pradesh Minister and BJP leader Inder Singh Parmar has sparked controversy by saying that social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a "British agent", prompting the TMC to call the remarks an insult to Bengal.
Details on Page 5

Nepal EC announces poll schedule

The Election Commission of Nepal on Sunday published the schedule for the parliamentary election to be held in March. The candidates will have to file nomination from 10 am to 6 pm on January 20.

Sabarimala opens for pilgrimage

The Sabarimala Ayyappa temple in Kerala opened for its annual pilgrimage on Sunday evening, even as the probe into the temple gold-heist case is at its peak.
Details on Page 10

UK to make refugee status temporary

Britain said it would make refugee status temporary and the wait for permanent settlement would be quadrupled to 20 years under the country's most sweeping overhaul of policy on asylum seekers in modern times. The government has been hardening its immigration policies.
Details on Page 11

Kadlekai Parishe begins today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The historic Kadlekai Parishe will begin in Basavanagudi on Monday, with this year's groundnut fair extended to five days instead of the usual three.

The fair will remain plastic-free, and vendors will not be charged any fees.

More than five lakh people attended the 2024 edition of the event.

Earlier this month, the Malleswaram Kadlekai Parishe was held from November 8 to 10.

Woman sexually harassed while walking dog, robbed

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 25-year-old woman was allegedly sexually harassed and robbed while walking her dog in West Bengaluru at 10.30 pm on November 7.

The incident was reported to the police by the victim on November 8, but it became public later.

The FIR filed by Jnanabharathi police on November 8 states that the victim, a law practitioner, was walking her dog near Upakar Layout when the suspect approached and asked if he could pet the dog, then began talking to it.

The woman pulled away her dog, but the man touched her inappropriately, the FIR notes. He tried again, but she slapped him. During the commotion, her phone slipped from her hand. She screamed, and the suspect fled with her phone.

Police have opened the case under BNS sections 74 (assault or use of criminal force against a woman with intent or knowledge that it is likely to outrage her modesty), 75 (sexual harassment), 303 (theft), and 115 (voluntarily causing hurt). They are analysing CCTV footage to identify the suspect.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

National Press Day: UT Khader and MB Patil to inaugurate; Press Club, Cubbon Park; 11 am.

Award Ceremony: Soumyanatha Swamiji to attend; Organised by Karnataka Janapada Parishat; Ravindra Kalakshetra, JC Road; 10.30 am.

CULTURAL

Dhanvantari Jayanti Mahotsava: Organised by Kote Dhanvantari Ganapathi Temple Trust; Kote Dhanvantari Ganapathi Temple, KR Road; from 6.30 am onwards.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Partly cloudy sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	28.0°C
Minimum	17.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	56%
Sunset (Nov 17)	17:50 pm
Sunrise (Nov 18)	6:19 am
Moonrise	3:02 am
Moonset	3:11 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Invites to be published in this column should be sent to: **incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in.** Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

PUBLIC NOTICE

Publics are hereby informed that my client **M/s DS-Max Properties Pvt. Ltd.**, having its office at No. 1794, 14th Main, 30th Cross, HBR Layout, 1st Stage, 5th Block, Bengaluru - 43 and intend to enter into Absolute Sale Deed with Owner **Smt N. Vanishree** w/o Sri R. Shekar is the absolute owner in respect of undeveloped residentially converted land property bearing old Sy. No. 136, New Sy.No. **136/1**, which measuring **4 acres 06 guntas**, situated at **Kithaganur Village**, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, in vide; Conversion Order dated **12/10/2010**, in Order No.**ALN/PU.B.B./SR/12/10-11**, for residential purposes, issued by Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District and bounded on **East by:** Land in Sy. No. 165, **West by:** Land in Sy. No. 120 & 135, **North by:** Remaining Land in Sy. No. 136, **South by:** Road and referred to as **"schedule property".**

Any person or Any Authority or Any promoters or Any prospective purchaser/s having any asserting right, title, interest and claims to oppose for Absolute Sale Deed of property and further having any manner of right, title, claims etc., and may lodge their objections, claims over the property along with relevant papers in support of their claims, right to the below address within **10** days from the date of this notice, if any objections fails to comply, my client shall take further steps and deemed for entering into Absolute Sale Deed of property.

LINGARAJ. S. NADAGOUDA., ADVOCATE
No.1854, 17th Main, 30th 'B' Cross, HBR Layout, 1st Stage, 5th Block, Bangalore - 560 043.
Mob : 96204 74780 , 94481 35970

Cantt metro-rail link shelved; shuttle planned

Travelator, footbridge — both unfeasible: Officials

MUTHI-UR-RAHMAN SIDDIQUI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Forget the promised travelator, authorities are now unlikely to build even a foot overbridge connecting the Cantonment metro and railway stations in Shivajinagar.

With the Urban Development Department (UDD) rejecting its Rs 41.36-crore proposal to acquire land and widen three approach roads, Namma Metro has shelved the plan to build a foot overbridge connecting the two stations, located about a kilometre apart.

It's instead considering an electric vehicle service to shuttle commuters, when the 21.26-km Pink Line fully opens by December 2026.

The Cantonment metro station's location has been contentious. Initially planned right opposite the railway station, it was shifted nearly a kilometre away — to Abdul Bari's School ground at Bamboo Bazaar — due to technical reasons.

Residents and mobility experts had criticised the move, saying it would make transfers between the two stations inconvenient. They pointed out that the Yeshwantpur metro station also remains unconnected to the railway station across the road.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) had promised to build an elevated travelator to compensate for the relocation of the Cantonment station.

The plan was later revised to a 200-metre pedestrian overbridge to connect the railway station platform at Netaji Road Junction and the metro station's Entrance 'C', off Bamboo Bazaar Road, with escalators at both ends.

Two senior BMRCL officials with knowledge of the matter cited land acquisition and tree-cutting hurdles in widening the narrow approach roads for constructing the bridge.

"It is essential to widen these roads to build the FOB, but fund crunch is a hurdle," a senior official said. "There are also safety concerns. The bridge will be considerably long with no midway ramps. Passengers with luggage may find it difficult to use."

Shivajinagar MLA Rizwan Arshad said the BMRCL was "duty-bound" to build the FOB with escalators, as agreed in a meeting he had held.

"They can't just build a metro station and ignore last-mile connectivity. Otherwise, ridership will suffer," he told *DH*.

Bangalore Central MP, PC Mohan, echoed the concern, calling the connectivity the BMRCL's "firm guarantee". "The two stations must be connected," he stated and promised to conduct an inspection to review the progress.

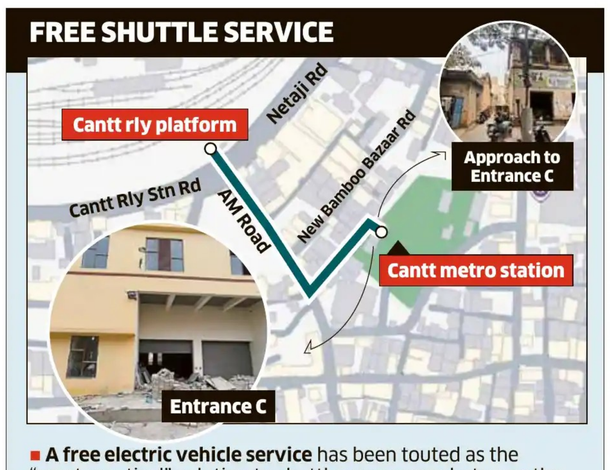
Meanwhile, the BMRCL is acquiring land at three places to improve access to the Cantonment metro station: a) 480 sqm, off Bamboo Bazaar Road; b) 218.674 sqm on Dhanakoti Road; and c) 332.104 sqm from Madeena Masjid.

"Preliminary land acquisition notifications have been issued," one of the officials said.

RIZWAN ARSHAD
Shivajinagar MLA

"The BMRCL is duty-bound to build the FOB with escalators. They can't just build a metro station and ignore last-mile connectivity. Otherwise, ridership will suffer.

FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE



- **A free electric vehicle service** has been touted as the "most practical" solution to shuttle passengers between the Cantonment rail and metro stations, located **1 km apart.**
- The BMRCL had promised to build a travelator – **a moving walkway** – to connect the stations.
- The plan was later revised to a **200m FOB** to link the rail station platform at Netaji Road Jn and the metro station's **Entrance 'C'**, off Bamboo Bazaar Road, via escalators.
- But land acquisition and tree-cutting hurdles in widening the approach roads have put paid to the plans. The BMRCL is now acquiring **480 sqm from 5 buildings** to widen the aproach road near **Entrance 'C', from 3 to 18 metres,** and create a boarding and drop-off point for the shuttle service.

March 2026, new deadline for Bellandur lake rejuvenation

BDA struggles with slush, rains and funding

BENGALURU, DHNS

Five years after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) order and several missed deadlines, Bellandur lake's restoration remains stalled, with officials now hoping for a dry summer to complete the work.

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), the nodal agency, said desilting is the biggest challenge in rejuvenating the 890-acre lake, which made international headlines in 2016 when toxic foam engulfed a nearby road. Silt was later found to contain heavy metals, prohibiting its use as manure.

Officials blamed 'truant rains' for disrupting silt removal and transport. "This year, early monsoon rains hit the work. Even now, the lake holds too much water. A work order has been issued for dewatering, which may take several weeks. After that, the lake bed needs at least a month to dry," an official said.

Of the 32 lakh cubic metres of silt, about 10 lakh cubic metres spread over 200 acres must be moved to abandoned quarries on the outskirts of south Bengaluru. The BDA lost nearly six dry months between November and April, because funds of Rs 80 per acre were released only in April.

The silt was still slush in October, and the track used for transporting it was damaged.

The BDA said it has begun allied preparatory works for desilting, including digging trenches and clearing weeds to enable dewatering. Officials added that actual silt-removal will begin will resume only in January. "That is, if it does not rain," an official added.

Creation of the wetland, a key part of rejuvenation, is yet to begin. Three wetlands are planned at the main inlet of Koramangala and Agara Valley, followed by similar works at the Iblur and HAL inlets. These can begin only after the lake is cleaned of waste.

"If all goes as planned, we hope to complete desilting by the end of March and finish much of the wetland work at the same time," the official added.

The BDA, the nodal agency, said desilting is the biggest challenge in rejuvenating the 890-acre lake. DH FILE PHOTO

"This year, early monsoon rains hit the work. Even now, the lake holds too much water. A work order has been issued for dewatering, which may take several weeks. After that, the lake bed needs at least a month to dry.

OFFICIAL

Panathur Road to reopen today; but commuters say 'great relief' far off

BENGALURU, DHNS

The white-topping work on Panathur Road has been completed, and the HAL Airport Traffic Police have confirmed that the stretch will reopen to vehicular movement from Monday.

While the reopening is expected to ease daily inconvenience, residents say the relief will be limited unless long-pending road infrastructure projects are taken up. Many have urged authorities to begin work on the long-promised CDP Road, approved nearly a decade ago.

'Band-aid solution'

"Panathur Road is just a band-aid. The deeper issues remain," said Shwetha Rangaswamy, a resident and member of the Individual Tax Payers' Forum. She added that authorities must reconsider approvals for new high-rises in an already overburdened neighbourhood.

"Until the CDP Road is fixed, Panathur traffic will not improve. The traffic pressure has only shifted from 25 metres to 35 metres," she said.

Another resident, who preferred to remain anonymous, pointed out that drain pipes remain unattended and could worsen mobility if it rains in the coming days.

The white-topping work, which began in early October, forced commuters to navigate a rough alternative route. The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) did not provide a proper diversion, and a video showing commuters riding on a dirt track had gone viral on social media.

Toddler dies after father accidentally drives over him

BENGALURU, DHNS: A toddler died after being accidentally run over by his father in a freak accident on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Saturday, police officials said.

The deceased, Nuthan, was aged one year and 10 months.

The child arrived with his parents — Devika and Munesh — in Dasanapura, off Tumakuru Road, three days ago to visit Devika's brother, Mohan.

The couple and Mohan visited another relative in Benaka Layout on Saturday morning.

At around 10.45 am, Munesh, without realising Nuthan was playing in front of the car, drove over the child. The toddler suffered grievous injuries and was pronounced dead at the hospital later.

Police have opened a case of causing death by negligence under BNS Section 106.

Techie killed in crash

In a separate accident, a 25-year-old software engineer died and his friend was injured when the motorcycle they were riding collided with a divider on Electronics City Phase 1 in the early hours of Sunday, police said.

The two were returning home after a late-night dinner. Police suspect rash driving led to Vishal losing control and crashing.

A passerby took them to the hospital, where Vishal was pronounced dead. Police are trying to identify his friend.

Road rage: Trio attack pvt firm employee

BENGALURU, DHNS: Three bike-borne men allegedly attacked a private firm employee on Church Road near Shantinagar on Saturday.

Police suspect it to be a case of road rage.

Police said between 4.30 and 5.30 am, the three on a motorcycle had asked the victim, who was also on a two-wheeler, to give way. When he refused, a minor altercation broke out and the three followed the victim, questioning the way he responded.

Further argument led to two of them allegedly assaulting the victim. A case has been registered.

Sadashivanagar residents organise plogging drive; clean 10-km stretch, collect 280 kg waste

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Sadashivanagar Residents' Welfare Association undertook the 'Clean Green Sadashivanagar' initiative on Sunday, with more than 250 residents, volunteers, and students participating.

The association adopted the Swedish plogging method — where people pick up litter while jogging, brisk walking, or hiking.

Participants cleaned a stretch of about 8 to 10 km and collected over 280 kg of waste.

"We are following the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) cleaner Bengaluru initiative and want to make Sadashivanagar a model area," said Sriram Tadimalla, a resident of the area.

Association members said that while the authorities are doing a good job of keeping the city clean, it is also the responsibility of residents to avoid littering on the roads or other public areas.

"This is also an awareness campaign for residents to dispose of garbage in designated places and follow cleaner initiatives," said Vishal S Makhija, association secretary.

"Swedish alumni, Sattvam, students from schools and colleges, and children as young as six are participating in the drive to raise awareness."

The crew was divided into colour-coded teams — red, orange, blue, yellow, and green — and the locality was split into zones.

"We have assigned 10 to 15 members to each zone to help clean the locality faster," said Rahul Tadimalla, another resident.

"GBA workers have been very helpful and have coordinated well with the residents, which is appreciated," said Indu Sridhar, resident and former association president.

The awareness drive also included children to help them understand and follow proper decorum.

Residents during the 'Clean Green Sadashivanagar' drive on Sunday. They were divided into colour-coded teams.

Need a hand? Write to us

Letters of grievances are pouring in and we are doing our best to accommodate as many as possible. Readers may write in to highlight civic problems affecting their locality and we will help address them in an interactive and effective manner. Grievances and issues related to public utility agencies such as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) would be highlighted in the weekly column. The writeups, which could be accompanied by photographs highlighting the problems, will be published on Mondays. Mail your grievances to: peoplesproblems@deccanherald.co.in

Slow truck drivers on NICE Road

While travelling on NICE Road from Mysuru Road to Hosur Road, one often finds interstate goods vehicles occupying the two right-most lanes and moving very slowly. With only three lanes available, this leaves just the left-most lane for two-wheelers and four-wheelers, creating serious congestion and inconvenience.

This has become a perennial issue. Signboards clearly state that slow-moving vehicles must use the left-most lane, yet this rule is routinely violated. Additionally, many truck drivers are seen using mobile phones while driving, posing a significant safety hazard.

I request the authorities concerned to conduct regular checks on NICE Road.

Commuters pay high tolls to ensure a faster, smoother journey, but these violations defeat the very purpose of a tolled road.

In the absence of traffic police, drivers take advantage of the situation, and strict enforcement is urgently needed.

K Sreeshan
Anjanapura 5th Block

Commuters are frustrated by stray cattle on the roads as it can endanger motorists and worsen traffic.

Stray cattle obstruct Sarjapur Road

Bengaluru's traffic woes have taken a bizarre turn, with stray cattle now frequently obstructing busy roads. Already known for potholes and persistent congestion, the city is now grappling with cows wandering through dense traffic and causing severe disruptions.

A recent incident on the Sarjapur Road stretch from St John's Hospital in Koramangala saw cattle blocking the middle of the road, forcing vehicles to halt and triggering long tailbacks. Commuters are increasingly frustrated by this growing menace, which endangers road users and worsens gridlocks.

I urge the civic authorities, particularly the Greater Bengaluru Authority and the traffic police, to act immediately to regulate stray cattle movement and keep them off main roads. Prompt action is essential to prevent further hazards in an already overburdened traffic system.

N Sadhasiva Reddy,
RR Layout,
Jnanabharathi

Incomplete work puts residents in distress

The work to build a concrete culvert at 10, Main Road, Raghavendra Block, Srinagar, opposite Kusuma Hospital, is 95% complete, with only a small portion pending right at our doorstep.

This unfinished stretch is causing great inconvenience to both pedestrians and vehicles entering and exiting the building.

Despite numerous requests, the issue has not been addressed. I request the authorities to complete the remaining work at the earliest.

BS Mukesh

This unfinished stretch is causing great inconvenience to people entering and exiting the building.

Garbage black spot in JP Nagar

Garbage is being cleared regularly in JP Nagar 2nd Phase, particularly on 4th Cross near Chirag Hospital and Gnana Jyothi School. However, heaps of waste continue to pile up, with many litterers reportedly coming from other areas.

I request the authorities to clear the garbage more consistently and take measures to prevent its recurrence.

Hariharan Agilan

Heaps of waste pile up, with many litterers coming from other areas.

Despite feasibility debate, BMRCL to prepare DPR for Tumakuru metro

Floats tenders on Detailed Project Report for Rs 20,896-cr project

BENGALURU, DHNS

Setting the ball rolling for building a mass rapid transit system between Bengaluru and Tumakuru, Namma Metro on Sunday floated tenders for preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the 59.6-km corridor starting at Madavara.

This line is estimated to cost Rs 20,896 crore with 27 stations, including two planned for the future.

According to Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), the Madavara-Nelamangala section will have stations spaced 1-2 km apart, while the stretch from Nelamangala to Tumakuru may get a station every 4-5 km.

Given the high cost, the project may be taken up by under PPP, BOT, DFBOT, DBFOT or the Developer Finance Model.

The Tumkuru corridor is one of the five extensions and three new lines proposed under Namma Metro's 210.9-km Phase 4, mainly aimed at connecting the city's core to the periphery.

The BMRCL is going ahead with the DPR preparation after the state government accepted the Feasibility Study Report on the Madavara-Tumakuru metro line earlier this year.

The BMRCL has given bidders just a week to submit the Requests for Proposal (RFPs) and will open the bids on November 21. Bidders will have five months from the award of the Letter of Acceptance (LoA) to prepare the DPR.

The consultant will have to explore the most reasonable and feasible Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system, evaluating mobility, conceptual engineering, environmental and social assessment, cost effectiveness and affordability, and financial and economic aspects. A key aspect of the DPR should be integration with existing and planned metro rail corridors as well as bus terminals and railway stations.

It will also suggest whether the line should be elevated, underground or at-grade.

The consultant will undertake geotechnical investigations along the corridor and the depot location, topography, traffic and transportation surveys, future travel demand and ridership assessment.

Critics say suburban rly or Rail Rapid Transit System is better for inter-city connectivity

The project has received criticism since it was first mooted by Home Minister and Tumakuru district in-charge minister G Parameshwara nearly two years ago.

Critics say a metro is better suited for intra-city travel while a suburban railway or Rail Rapid Transit System (RRTS) line is better for inter-city connectivity.

Namma Metro's average operating speed is 34 kmph, meaning the 60-km distance will take nearly two hours, the same as a bus or train.

The South Western Railway (SWR) plans to quadruple the Bengaluru-Tumakuru line at a cost of Rs 3,500 crore. Railway Infrastructure Development Company Karnataka (K-RIDE) has proposed a suburban line to Tumakuru. Recently, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) showed interest in in preparing DPRs for RRTS corridors between Bengaluru and four cities, including Tumakuru. However, all these projects are still in the conceptual stage.

A senior BMRCL official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, indicated the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is unlikely to approve the Tumakuru line unless it is taken up under a PPP model.

Another official noted that clarity on funding will come only after the DPR is finalised, approved by Karnataka and sent to the ministry. The process could take up to two years.

B'luru man's frantic search in futility for missing father in Kochi

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPUAM, DHNS

It has been more than a month since a youth from Bengaluru started roaming around in Kochi to trace his missing father who was deported from Kuwait.

The Kerala High Court has now directed the police to carry out a comprehensive search.

Santon Lama, hailing from Kothnur in Bengaluru, was in Kochi for more than a month in search of his father Suraj Lama, 59, who reportedly reached Kochi after being deported from Kuwait as his visa expired.

Suraj, who was into restaurant business in Kuwait for more than 20 years, fell ill and suffered amnesia in September.

As his visa expired, he was deported to Kochi, instead of Bengaluru, on October 5. His family came to know about it by October 7 and Santon rushed to Kochi. The only information he received was that Suraj was taken to Kalamaserry medical college hospital by the police on October 8, after he was found unwell on the street. But he left the hospital and the police failed to trace him.

Santon, with the help of an autorickshaw driver, has been roaming around in the city with posters of his father.

Though he received calls informing that Suraj was spotted somewhere in Kochi, the son's efforts to find him have remained futile.

Santon Lama roamed around Kochi for a month holding a poster with a photo of his missing father Suraj. PHOTO BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He filed a habeas corpus petition in the Kerala High Court and the court directed the police to undertake a comprehensive search last week.

Santon, who is working with a multinational tech firm in Bengaluru, was forced to leave Kochi for Bengaluru last week, owing to financial stress.

"It is very disappointing that we have no clue about his whereabouts despite the extensive search I have been carrying out and the circulation of his pictures through the media. Since the HC has now intervened, we hope that the police will carry out an extensive search," he told *DH*.

Suraj and his wife Rina have their family roots in Kolkata. They are settled in Bengaluru.

'In UP, whoever wins LS polls wins Assembly too'

BENGALURU, DHNS:

Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav emphasised the significance of his party's performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, stating that "the party that wins the parliamentary polls in UP, wins the state elections too."

"Every election is different. If we look at Karnataka, Congress was number one in the Assembly elections, but in the Parliamentary elections the result was different. In UP, the parliament election was different. The results are different in Assembly and parliamentary polls. But in UP, whichever party wins Parliament, wins Assembly too. This has been the record for many years now," Akhilesh said during a media interaction on the occasion of a programme Vision India: Plan, Development and Ascent, in Bengaluru.

Akhilesh was referring to the Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance (INDIA)'s strong performance in UP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, where it won 43 seats (37 for SP and 06 for Congress) out of a possible 80. The Assembly polls in UP are due in 2027.

The former UP chief minister noted that the SP had registered such a performance despite the "double engine" government of the BJP.

Akhilesh pointed out that the Election Commission is an institution and their responsibility is to ensure a fair election in the country.

Krishi Mela concludes with 54.16 lakh visitors; showcases tech-driven growth

BENGALURU, DHNS: The agriculture sector has strengthened with the support of modern technology, new crop varieties, government programmes and university-led research, Agriculture Minister N Cheluvarayaswamy said on Sunday.

Speaking at the valedictory and awards ceremony of Krishi Mela 2025, organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) at GKVK, he said that interest in farming has expanded beyond rural areas, with even urban residents, including IT&BT employees, showing enthusiasm for agriculture. "We must ensure that farmers earn better income and there has to be a movement in agriculture," he noted.

Farmers inspect a tool on sale on the final day of Krishi Mela in Bengaluru on Sunday. DH PHOTO/PRSHANTH HG

Cheluvarayaswamy also highlighted the contributions of environmentalist Saalumarada Thimmakka, who has planted over 5,000 saplings. "Her commitment to environmental conservation should always be remembered," he said.

This year's Krishi Mela featured over 750 stalls and attracted 54.16 lakh visitors. The event recorded transactions worth Rs 4.77 crore over four days.

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the Bengaluru Krishi Mela drew a humongous crowd. "Krishi Mela is a science fair. The happiness of farmers, successful participation from women and guidance of scientists were the life of the fair," he said.

He added that recognising model farmers through awards helps inspire others to adopt better practices.

A farmer-to-farmer discussion on indigenous crop varieties and traditional farming systems was held on the final day. Awards presented at the ceremony included the Dr MH Marigowda National Endowment Award for Excellence in Horticultural Research, the Dr MH Marigowda State-level Best Horticulture Farmer Award, and the Dr R Dwarakinath Best Farmer Award.

Two more blackbucks die in Belagavi zoo, toll rises to 30

BELAGAVI, DHNS: The number of blackbuck deaths at Rani Chennamma mini zoo here has gone up to 30 as two more antelopes died - one each on late Saturday night and Sunday evening. Officials suspect bacterial infection to be the cause.

On Thursday, eight blackbucks were found dead and the toll rose to 28 on Saturday, following the death of 20 antelopes. A team of veterinary experts from Bengaluru comprising Dr Chandrashekar N of Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, Dr Manjunath V and Dr Sunil Panwar, member-secretary of Zoo Authority of Karnataka visited the zoo. The forest minister has ordered a probe into the mass deaths.

Cyber fraudsters use over 300 bank accounts

MANGALURU, DHNS: The Mangaluru CEN police have arrested two individuals involved in a major cyber fraud racket that used over 300 bank accounts and 250 SIM cards to cheat victims.

According to Police Commissioner Sudheer Kumar Reddy C H, an unidentified person had impersonated Customs officials and cheated a complainant of Rs 7,27,000 by extracting money in multiple installments. Based on the complaint, the police had initiated a detailed investigation.

The arrested are Damenjoy Reang (27), a resident of Dhalai, Tripura, and Hmngte Reail Kom alias Mangte Amosh (33), a resident of Kangpokpi district, Manipur.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

BENGALURU TECH SUMMIT 2025
Bangalore International Exhibition Centre
November 18-20

Inauguration Tomorrow at 10:00 AM

GUESTS OF HONOUR

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Minister of Health and Care Services, Norway

H.E. Ms. Ilse Aigner
President of the Bavarian State Parliament, Germany

H.E. Mr. Rafal Rosinski
Deputy Minister, Digital Affairs, Poland

Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece
Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Australia

TECH SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

Business Expo
Multitrack Conference
Awards & Quizzes
Startup Pitches & Product Launches

FUTURE MAKERS CONCLAVE

CO-HOST
K-tech

ATTEND CONFERENCE VISIT EXPO

GLOBAL INNOVATION ALLIANCE PARTNERS

RSS getting funds by laundering, benami donations: Priyank Kharge

BENGALURU, DHNS: Continuing his attack on the RSS, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Priyank Kharge fired a fresh salvo at the sangh, calling it 'a shadow ecosystem the tentacles of which had spread across every sphere of public life.'

Disputing the Sangh's claims of running the organisation with the 'Guru Dakshina' it received, Priyank wrote on 'X': "The real engine of its operation is a complex web of money laundering, benami donations and the opaque system of electoral bonds that allowed thousands of crores of rupees to be funnelled into politics."

The secrecy that underpinned the Sangh's operations, coupled with unregulated funding and ideological penetration kept the RSS 'dangerously unaccountable' in a democracy, opined the RDPR Minister.

Soon, app-based system to monitor sales at fair price shops

Single device to manage billing, inventory, weighing

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Soon, the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the state may undergo a smart revamp with the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department planning to introduce an integrated app-based management system.

Once the system is in place, a handheld electronic point of sale (ePoS) machine which is integrated with a mobile application and government database will completely verify the Aadhaar information of the beneficiary, record the weight of the foodgrain distributed and update it to the central server for real time monitoring. This, the officials said, will prevent fraud, leakage, and improve transparency.

"This solution provides retailers, wholesalers, and field operators with a single handheld device to manage sales, billing, inventory, weighing, and digital payments efficiently. It is a technology oriented smart update to the system. It will help prevent leakages and frauds and also keep a check on the shopkeepers at the fair price shops," a senior official from the department said.

The ePoS machine will be linked to the electronic weighing machine ensuring that beneficiaries get the exact quantity of ration they are eligible for. That apart, the complete integration will also help the beneficiaries collect the ration from any fair price shop since the system is centralised. This, sources said, will help keep a check on shopkeepers at the fair price shops who do not behave well with the people or provide poor service.

A research on the impact of use of such technology driven measures in other states has shown a clear uptake in the number of beneficiaries since the process is now easier and consumer friendly.

The ePoS machine will be linked to the electronic weighing machine ensuring that beneficiaries get the exact quantity of ration they are eligible for. DH FILE PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

Pilot rollout at 290 FPSs

In Karnataka, a pilot project will soon take off from 290 fair price shops in Bengaluru East and Bengaluru North IRAs (Informal Rationing Areas). "We have invited tenders to put the system in place on a pilot basis. Once it's successful, we will eventually expand the system to cover all the fair price shops in the state," the official added.

The initiative is a part of the smart PDS system which is aimed at modernising the PDS with technology driven initiatives. The initiative is going on from April 2023 and the Central government has directed all the states to implement a comprehensive smart PDS system within March 2026.

As part of the initiative, Karnataka is looking at an end-to-end technology driven solution. From GPS tracking systems for the trucks that carry the food grains to an integrated command centre, a number of other initiatives are also being planned.

DKS meets Kharge, 'raises change of leadership issue'

Party president tells DCM to discuss matter with Rahul

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar called on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge here on on Sunday and is learnt to have raised the change of leadership issue in the state.

Shivakumar met the veteran leader at his residence along with his brother D K Suresh.

Though Shivakumar refused to speak to media after the meeting, sources told *DH* that the Vokkaliga leader had raised the leadership change issue.

Sources said Kharge reportedly told him to speak to Congress senior leader Rahul Gandhi on the matter.

Speaking to reporters before the meeting, Shivakumar dismissed media speculations that he had resigned as state party president in protest against not being made the CM.

The DCM said, "I have to ensure that foundation stones are laid for 100 new Congress party offices in Karnataka".

He said, "I am meeting the AICC president to finalize dates for laying foundation stones for new Congress offices. I would like Kharge and Rahul Gandhi to lay the foundation stones. I am asking for a date before Dec 1, when Parliament session begins".

CM in Delhi today; to call on PM Modi

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will arrive in the national capital on Monday, when he is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The CM will meet the PM at 5 pm and will leave for Bengaluru at 7 pm.

At the meeting, the CM will raise the state's pending issues, including pending approval for Mahadayi and Mekedatu water projects.

Though as per current schedule, the CM has no plan to meet Mallikarjun Kharge or any other party leader, sources in the CM's office said Siddaramaiah may meet the latter if time permits.

If the meeting takes place, he may raise the issue of the long-pending Cabinet reshuffle, sources said.

Cabinet reshuffle CM's prerogative, says D K Suresh

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru Cooperative Milk Union Ltd (BAMUL) president and Congress leader D K Suresh said on Sunday that a Cabinet reshuffle was the prerogative of the CM.

Suresh, a former MP and Deputy CM D K Shivakumar's brother, told reporters: "The CM is acting as per the directions of the high command. If high command discusses it with Shivakumar, he will give suggestions. There's already a CM now. When there's no CM, we can discuss leadership change."

RSS route march passes off peacefully in Chittapur

KALABURAGI, DHNS

The route march conducted by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) passed off peacefully amid tightened police security in Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge's home turf of Chittapur on Sunday.

The high court had given conditional permission for the event. The row had attracted attention of the people in the state after tahsildar denied the permission last month citing possible law and order problems and the government's decision to restrict the event on the premises of government land and other public places.

The Swayamsevaks, in traditional ganavesha and bamboo sticks, marched for a few kilometres, with the local residents and women showering them with flower petals.

Thousands of people had thronged on either side of the route to witness the RSS path sanchalan which started from Bajaj Kalyan Mantap. They shouted slogans 'Bharat Mataki Jai', 'Vande Mataram', 'Jai Sri Rama', 'Jai Bhavani, Jai Shivaji'. A total of 300 ganaveshadharis and the 50-member band had taken part in the march.

Thousands line up on either side of the road to witness the RSS route march, as part of centenary celebrations of the Sangh, in Chittapur on Sunday. DH PHOTO/TAJUDDIN AZAD

Saffron flags and buntings were put up across the town. Welcome arches were also erected at four places. The police had cordoned off all four roads connecting the town and conducted inspection of the vehicles, including buses entering the town.

Police had made elaborate security arrangements. A total of 1,200 personnel, including one additional SP, five DySPs, 18 CPIs, 51 PSIs, 110 ASIs, 501 constables, 250 home guards, eight KSRP platoons, six district armed reserve forces, one Army Service Corps troop, were deployed in the town as security measure. t.

The Chittapur Town Municipal Council and police department had installed 56 CCTV cameras along the route. Police had also used 10 drone cameras to monitor the event.

Speculations over, preparations on for Nitish's swearing-in

Nitish, from Page 1

"Senior JD (U) leaders like Sanjay Jha and Lalan Singh have already met Amit Shah in New Delhi on Saturday evening in this regard. Nitish in Patna too is meeting the NDA allies and giving the final shape to his Cabinet," the source said.

Sources in the Chief Minister Office (CMO) said on Sunday that Nitish has convened a Cabinet meeting on Monday where he will recommend dissolution of the 17th Bihar Vidhan Sabha.

Following the Cabinet meeting, he will proceed to the Raj Bhawan where he will meet Governor Arif Mohammad Khan and submit his resignation as the Bihar CM.

The Election Commission, meanwhile, submitted the papers related to Bihar election to the Governor following which the model code of conduct came to end on Sunday and decks were cleared for constitution of the 18th Bihar Vidhan Sabha.

Nitish Kumar

The term of the present House ends on November 22.

The new Cabinet headed by Nitish will include representatives from all the five partners of the NDA — the JD (U), BJP, LJP (R), HAM and the RLM (Rashtriya Lok Morcha).

While the BJP and JD (U) have won 89 and 85 seats, respectively, the smaller allies LJP (R), HAM and RLM have won 19, 5 and 4 seats, respectively, taking the NDA tally to 202 in the 243-member Assembly.

"There will be one minister for every six MLAs," said the source in the NDA.

"This essentially means the BJP will have 15 ministers, while the JD (U) 14. Besides, the LJP will have three, HAM and RLM one each," the source added.

Tunnel road: Only 2 of 4 bidders...

Tunnel, From Page 1

Other bidders have also faced construction failures, though not all fall under the disqualification clause.

The Adani Group's Azhiyur–Vengalam Road Ltd saw a highway collapse in Kerala linked to poor soil-nailing and reinforced-soil works, for which the NHAI issued a show-cause notice recommending up to one year's debarment.

Hyderabad-based Vishwa Samudra Engineering was involved in the six-laning project on NH-66 in Kerala where a retaining-wall failure killed two workers. RVNL, too, saw a part of its NH-66 embankment collapse at Kooriyad, Kerala, which NHAI attributed to inadequate bearing capacity of the foundation soil.

Financial eligibility further thins the field. The tender requires a net worth of Rs 2,192 crore in the financial year 2024–25. According to an Infomerics rating report, Vishwa Samudra Holdings — the group's holding company — had an adjusted tangible net worth of Rs 1,447.36 crore as of March 2024. While the firm's 2025 investor brochure cites revenues of Rs 3,950 crore, it does not disclose a corresponding net-worth figure for FY 2025. Industry experts say that the absence of heavyweights in Bengaluru's tunnel road shows limited private-sector confidence in the project's risk–reward balance, especially given that the tunnel will be built on a model requiring the concessionaire to fund 60% of the cost and recover investments primarily through tolls and commercial development.

"A weak response usually means the private sector doesn't find the project financially or technically viable," a retired bureaucrat said, possibly because the government did not supply adequate information related to soil data and traffic studies for companies to make better assessments of the project. "With limited participation and major tunnelling specialists staying away, the tender risks reduced competition, increasing the possibility of cost escalation and more generous concession terms for the eventual winner."

NIA arrests key conspirator in Red Fort...

NIA, from Page 1

According to officials familiar with the probe, Umar was part of a close-knit group of doctors and academics who allegedly embraced an extreme ideology over the last 3 years. The NIA and J&K police have pieced together a shadowy timeline: a trip to Turkiye in 2021, discreet meetings in masjids across south Kashmir and a quiet but systematic procurement of chemicals.

Over 360 kg of material — acquired from regular market sources & stored in makeshift facilities around the Faridabad varsity — was recovered earlier this month, pointing to a scale of preparations far beyond a single strike.

The contours of the network surfaced unexpectedly last month when the Srinagar police investigated Jaish-e-Mohammed posters on walls in Bunpora, Nowgam. CCTV analysis led to 3 local arrests — each with prior involvement in street violence — and subsequently to the detention of an imam from Shopian who, investigators say, had ties to the radicalised medical circle. That thread eventually intersected with Delhi blast probe, prompting J&K police, Haryana police and central agencies to work in tandem.

Officials say the most chilling detail that emerged is the module's prolonged search for a suicide attacker — an element they considered essential to stage high-impact operations. While Umar allegedly pushed this line more aggressively than others, at least one young recruit approached for the role is said to have backed out months ago.

With Umar now confirmed as the man driving the explosive-laden vehicle, investigators are examining whether he chose to carry out the attack himself after the original plan collapsed.

With one conspirator arrested, another dead and several suspects detained in Kashmir, the hunt is now focused on identifying the larger ring behind what officials say is one of the most sophisticated "white-collar terror ecosystems" uncovered in recent years.

(With inputs from Delhi)

B'luru woman techie loses Rs 32 cr...

Digital arrest, from Page 1

Over the next few days, she was placed under a so-called "house arrest" via a Skype call with her camera on. Later, a man identifying himself as CBI officer Pradeep Singh assigned another man named Rahul Yadav to "monitor" her for a week. During this time, the victim worked from home.

On September 23, 2024, Singh questioned her over Skype at a hotel and asked her to declare her assets to the RBI's "Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)".

According to a senior police officer, the victim broke her fixed deposits and liquidated other savings to transfer Rs 31.83 crore in 187 transactions as per the fraudsters' instructions. She was assured the money would be returned to her after "verification" by February 2025. She even received a "clearance certificate" on December 1, 2024, days before her son's engagement.

The ordeal continued until March 2025, with the perpetrators giving one excuse or another before abruptly ending all communication on March 26. Throughout this period, she was threatened, harassed and abused by unknown individuals.

Based on her complaint, the East Cybercrime Police registered an FIR on November 14. A probe has been launched, and the police are reviewing the transaction trail.

The victim told the police she delayed filing the complaint because she was in shock, was occupied with her son's wedding in June and her international travel, and she fell ill for nearly a month. "If only she had informed someone or even cut the call, she would've been safe," the senior police officer said, adding that the case will likely be handed over to the CID as the sum lost is over Rs 3 crore.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over the state.

Forecast Nov 17: Mainly clear sky. Mist likely during early morning hours in some areas.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	28.6	13.8	0.0
Bidar	26.5	10.4	0.0
Vijayapura	28.8	11.6	0.0
Dharwad	28.8	11.8	0.0
Haveri	28.2	13.0	0.0
Kalaburagi	30.8	21.5	0.0
Raichur	29.0	14.0	0.0
COASTAL			
Honnavar	34.5	21.9	0.0
Karwar	34.8	22.0	0.0
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	32.6	22.1	0.0

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	31.0	15.4	0.0
Bengaluru	27.3	17.4	0.0
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	--	--	--
Chikkamagaluru	--	--	--
Chitradurga	27.7	15.8	0.0
Davangere	30.0	13.0	0.0
Hassan	32.8	NA	NA
Mysuru	29.8	17.6	NA
Madikeri	--	--	--
Kolar	27.6	13.6	0.0
OTHER STATIONS			
New Delhi	26.0	11.0	NIL
Kolkata	29.0	21.0	NIL
Mumbai	31.0	24.0	NA
Chennai	28.0	26.0	NA
Pune	28.0	12.0	NA
Hyderabad	27.0	15.0	NA
Th'puram	29.0	24.0	NIL

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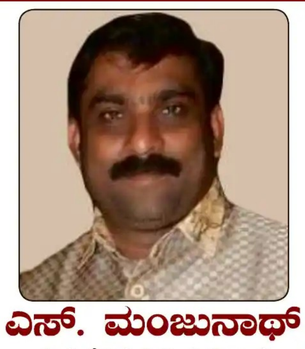

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ಇಂತಿ ದುಃಖಪ್ತರು:
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ಹೊರಮಾವು ಗ್ರಾಮ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು

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1) Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi invites 30 tenders as per KTPP Act, 1999 and Rules, 2000 through KPPP Portal 2.0 for works in KW- 1&3 Tender bid documents under 15th FC 2025-26, 15th FC 2022-23, 2023-24 & 2024-25 Savings, Amrut2.0 & 2025-26 SFC Untied (Capital Asset, SCP/TSP) Grant for 15 Days Tender.
The bid documents can download from KPPP Portal website and any information related to these tenders will be updated on www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in
2) Estimate Sanction cost: **lowest amount Rs. 1.00 lakhs & Highest amount Rs. 95.68 lakhs.** 3) EMD Value: Lowest Rs. 1,100.00 & Highest Rs. 1,62,000.00, 4) Pre Bid Meeting date: **03.12.2025 upto 11-00 am**. 4) Last date of Bid Submission: **03.12.2025 upto 4-30 pm.**, 5) Technical Bid Opening date:**04.12.2025 upto 4-35 pm.** 6) Financial Bid Opening date: **05.12.2025 after 11:30 am.** 7) Office Address : Executive Engineer, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi. 8) For more details visit Office Website **http://www.kalaburagicity.mrc.gov.in/**
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CONNECTING THE DOTS: Raids expose doctors, traders and interstate academic network

White-collar fronts, dark links: J&K probe deepens

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

What began as a routine probe after Jaish-e-Mohammad terror outfit threat posters surfaced in Srinagar's Nowgam area in mid-October has now spiralled into one of Kashmir's most complex investigations — drawing in doctors, traders and links to an interstate academic network stretching all the way to Al-Falah University in Haryana.

As investigating agencies widen the net, the focus has shifted from the posters themselves to the people quietly operating behind seemingly ordinary lives.

Over the past week, the investigating agencies have carried out a series of coordinated raids across Srinagar and the south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama.

What they have recovered — from phones and laptops to travel documents — suggests a pattern of movement and communication that overlaps suspiciously with the timeline of the Faridabad explosives haul, the Red Fort car blast and the Nowgam police station tragedy, in which seized explosives detonated during examination.

A key operation took place late Saturday in Anantnag's Malaknag locality, where sleuths searched the house of a local doctor. Inside, they found a female doctor from Haryana residing as a tenant, prompting new scrutiny of her movements and contacts.

Her mobile phone was seized and sent for forensic examination as investigators work to determine whether her presence in the house was coincidental or part of a deeper operational pattern.

In the Qazigund area of Kulgam, the investigation took an alarming turn when Bilal Ahmad Wani, a dry-fruit seller questioned in the case, reportedly attempted to set himself on fire. Wani, a neighbour of key accused Dr Adeel Rather and Dr Muzaffar Rather, had been detained with his son Jasir last week. While Jasir remains in custody, Bilal is under treatment for burn injuries and is stated to be stable.

A woman seeks permission from a security officer to enter a blocked road leading to the Nowgam police station in Srinagar on Sunday. PTI

TERROR TRAIL

- Threat posters in Srinagar's Nowgam spark complex probe
- Searches in Srinagar, Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama
- Patterns coincide with Faridabad arms haul, Delhi blast and police station tragedy
- Evidence shows Delhi-Haryana-Kashmir travel linked to arms movement

Brothers under scrutiny

The Rather brothers remain central to the investigation. Dr Muzaffar, believed to be the primary handler, is suspected to have fled to Afghanistan. His younger brother, Dr Adeel, was arrested in Saharanpur on November 6 and continues to face sustained interrogation. Investigators suspect the two leveraged their professional status and interstate mobility to mask movements of material, money or operatives connected to the explosives recovered in Haryana.

Raids over the last week have produced notebooks, external drives and travel itineraries showing repeated Delhi-Haryana-Kashmir movement, some coinciding directly with periods when explosives are suspected to have been sourced or moved. Those detained so far are being questioned to map the social and operational chain rather than being treated as accused.

As agencies connect the dots between the Nowgam posters, the Faridabad explosives, the Red Fort attack and the Nowgam police station tragedy, the investigation is increasingly centred on individuals whose unobtrusive daily lives may have concealed the architecture of the entire operation.

9mm bullets found near Red Fort blast site under police lens

NEW DELHI, PTI: Security agencies are probing three bullet cartridges, two of them live rounds, recovered from the debris near the Red Fort blast site, a source said on Sunday.

The empty shell and two live bullets—a calibre not permitted for civilian use—were found close to the burnt Hyundai i20 car, which exploded on November 10 near the iconic Delhi monument, killing 13 people and wounding more than two dozen.

According to the source, the 9mm rounds are generally issued to specialised units or individuals with explicit permission.

"The staff deployed at the spot were also asked to check their issued ammunition, but none was found missing. The cartridges were there, but there was no weapon to fire them. We are trying to understand the entire matter that how the bullets reached the spot," said the source.

Security agencies also continue to examine the involvement of people linked to Al-Falah University in Haryana's Faridabad.

'Terror handlers now prefer recruits with no separatist links'

SRINAGAR, PTI: Youths with no past criminal record or separatist affiliation are now preferred for recruitment by terror handlers in Jammu and Kashmir to stay under the radar of security forces, officials in the know say.

This fresh strategy is completely different from the modus operandi adopted by them two decades ago, according to officials, which favoured those with established links to terror outfits.

The investigators probing the "white collar terror module" have found a distinct pattern and a common denominator among the accused persons who have been arrested or questioned so far. "The accused persons like Dr Adeel Rather, his brother Dr Muzaffar Rather, and Dr Muzammil Ganaie do not have any past criminal record or involvement in anti-national activities," an official said.

The official said even the family members of these radicalised youths have no past affiliation with any separatist or terror outfit. "Even Dr Umar Nabi, who was driving the car that blew up outside the Red Fort metro station in Delhi on November 10, did not have any past record. His family also has been clean in this aspect," the official said.

According to sources, this seems to be a deliberate ploy of the terror handlers operating in J&K or from across the border in Pakistan to lure highly qualified youth and those with no past criminal record.

"It would be unthinkable for anyone to believe that a group of doctors would indulge in terror activities... So, that gave these accused persons a cover right from the start," the official said.

The module was busted after posters threatening police and security forces appeared on walls in Bunpora, Nowgam, in mid-October.

A meticulous, frame-by-frame analysis of CCTV footage led investigators to identify and arrest suspects.

NEW STRATEGY

- Youths with no past criminal records preferred to stay under radar
- Under old strategy, youth with terror links were preferred
- Even family members of accused have clean record

MP minister's remark on Rammohan Roy sparks row

KOLKATA, DHNS: After BJP Lok Sabha member from Uttar Kannada, Visheshwar Hegde Kageri, now Inder Singh Parmar — a minister in the BJP's Madhya Pradesh government — has embarrassed the saffron party in West Bengal and handed the ruling Trinamool Congress another weapon to attack its principal challenger in the state.

Parmer accused 19th-century social reformer Raja Rammohan Roy of working as "an agent of the British" and starting a "vicious cycle of religious conversion".

The TMC immediately launched a counter-offensive, alleging that the BJP and its leaders had consistently insulted the doyens of Bengal's Renaissance and the state's cultural and literary icons.

TMC recently levelled the same allegation after Kageri claimed that Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore had written the *Jana Gana Mana* to welcome high officials of the British Raj, and that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Vande Mataram* should have been the national anthem instead.

Rammohan Roy (1772-1883) fought for the abolition of the practices of sati (burning of widows on the pyre of their deceased husbands), polygamy, and child marriage in Bengal. He was a staunch advocate of women's right to education and a strong opponent of the caste system.

Parmar, however, said at an event on Saturday that Roy, in fact, acted as an agent of the British Raj and aided in missionaries' campaigns to convert Hindus to Christianity in Bengal.

Absence of anti-BJP push behind Bihar drubbing: CPM

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The CPM on Sunday appeared to subtly differ from its allies on the Bihar poll debacle, indicating that the absence of a narrative and joint struggles against the BJP could be behind the NDA victory.

It also said the party would examine whether the Election Commission (EC)'s "partisan" attitude and "abrupt" special intensive revision (SIR) of voter rolls had any role in the I.N.D.I.A bloc's poor show.

It even called the ongoing SIR in 12 states a "calculated political project" by the BJP-RSS, operationalised through a "pliant" EC to "systematically disenfranchise millions of voters".

The CPM articulated these views after a two-day meeting of the party's Polit Bureau here, which ended on Sunday. The Bihar elections, SIR, and other developments were discussed.

Sources said top Left leaders were of the view that the lack of unity and a coherent narrative could have added to the I.N.D.I.A bloc's agony.

The CPM contested four seats and won one—Ajay Kumar in Bhibutipur.

NCP MP sparks row with remarks on distribution of money in polls

MUMBAI, DHNS: In what has sparked off a political controversy, former Union Civil Aviation Minister and NCP working president Praful Patel indicated that money and muscle power are used in elections by politicians.

Addressing a function, Patel, who was once close to Sharad Pawar, said that money needs to be distributed in elections, and even if money is distributed, voters take the money and vote according to their wish.

He also said that no one should consider himself a 'bahubali' (musclemen). "In the past, we have elected many bahubalis," he said in his home district of Gondia.

"No one gets elected purely on the basis of money... if someone is saying 'I have been elected because I have money', that doesn't happen," the NCP MP said.

However, NCP (SP) working president Supriya Sule said that he is in politics to do service. "I have always felt that politics is a way to serve people," she said, distancing herself from Patel.

Rohini: Cursed at for donating 'dirty kidney' to father

Lalu's daughter blames Tejashwi's aides for poll loss

PATNA, PTI

Rohini Acharya quit politics and disowned her family on Saturday.

Claiming that she was "cursed at" for donating a "dirty kidney" to her father, Lalu Prasad, in exchange for money and a party ticket, Rohini Acharya on Sunday said "she has been made an orphan", and advised all married women to refrain from saving "your God-like father if he has a son".

In an emotional outburst, 47-year-old Acharya, in a series of posts on X, said that "may no household give birth to a girl with a fate like that of Rohini".

The posts came a day after her announcement that she was quitting the party and disowning her family, while putting the blame for the RJD's debacle in the recent Bihar polls on her brother Tejashwi Yadav's close aides – RJD's MP Sanjay Yadav, who hails from Haryana, and Rameez, who is from a political family in Uttar Pradesh.

"Yesterday, I was cursed at and told that I am dirty, and that I got my father to have my dirty kidney transplanted into him, took crores of rupees, bought a ticket, and then got that dirty kidney put in," Acharya, who had unsuccessfully contested the Saran Lok Sabha seat in the 2024, said.

A doctor by qualification, she had on Saturday announced that she was quitting politics and disowning her family, insisting that accountability be fixed for the party's poor performance in the recently held polls, in which the RJD won only 25 seats of the 243-strong Bihar assembly.

In an apparent dig at Tejashwi and his former personal assistant Sanjay, who has come to enjoy tremendous clout in party affairs, she said, "To all the married women, I will say that when there's a son in your maternal home, never, ever save your God-like father; instead, tell your brother, the son of that house, to get his own kidney or that of one of his Haryanvi friends transplanted."

In another post, she alleged that she was verbally abused and a slipper was raised to hit her.

Kerala BLO ends life over 'SIR stress'

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

A booth-level officer (BLO) engaged in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll in Kerala has reportedly died by suicide, allegedly due to work-related stress.

The deceased, Aneesh George (41), a school peon, was found dead at his residence near Payyannur in the Kannur district on Sunday. Family members said he had been under pressure linked to the SIR enumeration duties.

The incident has triggered a political storm, with the CPM and Congress demanding that the SIR process be deferred until after the local body elections.

Election Commission officials clarified that BLOs engaged in SIR duties were exempted from local body election-related work and faced no additional workload from the enrolment exercise. He is survived by his parents, wife and three children.

His father said George had been under stress due to the SIR assignment. "He seemed tense about the job. There was no other reason for him to take such an extreme step," he said. He was reportedly under pressure to speed up enrolment, as Kerala is lagging behind other states.

Congress leaders claimed George had sought assistance from their booth-level agents to locate households unfamiliar to him. They alleged that workers from other political parties threatened him over this.

CPM leader MV Jayarajan said BLOs were under pressure to distribute enumeration forms to all households before November 15.

Chief Electoral Officer Rathan U Kelkar said a report has been sought from the Kannur district collector on the incident. He added that, so far, there have been no official complaints of work-related pressure from BLOs.

Raj teacher kills self amid pressure

A government school teacher in Jaipur allegedly ended his life on Sunday, with his family claiming he was under intense pressure to complete voter list-related work under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process. The teacher, Mukesh Jangid (45), posted at the Government Primary School, was also assigned duties as a BLO. His brother claimed to have found a suicide note, in which Mukesh allegedly wrote that he was under stress due to SIR duties and that his supervisor was pressuring him and threatening suspension, reports PTI.

Strike today

BLOs engaged in SIR duties in Kerala will go on strike on Monday, protesting George's death linked to work stress. Protest marches will be held at the Chief Electoral Office in Thiruvananthapuram and at all district collectorates.

(*If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, reach out to KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104*)

SIR 1.0: Almost 98% voters get enumeration forms

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Around 49.73 crore — or 97.52% — of 50.97 crore voters have been distributed enumeration forms as part of the second phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in 12 states and Union Territories (UTs).

The distribution of enumeration forms is complete in Goa and Lakshadweep, while all states had clocked over 90% distribution by 3 pm on Sunday, according to the Election Commission (EC).

Except for one, Block Level Officers have distributed enumeration forms in Lakshasweep, where there are 57,813 voters.

A Booth Level Officer assists a voter in filling out the enumeration form for the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bikaner on Sunday. PTI

In Goa, where there are 11.85 lakh voters, 21 enumeration forms are left. In Andaman and Nicobar, 99.94% of 3.1 lakh voters have been reached, leaving just 200 more to be covered.

In West Bengal, which saw protests against the SIR, the coverage is 99.16%: 7.59 crore of 7.66 crore voters have been given their enumeration forms.

Another high performer was Gujarat, where 99.16% — 5.04 crore of 5.08 crore voters — have been covered.

In Madhya Pradesh, 99.45% — 5.70 crore of 5.74 crore voters — have got their enumeration forms.

In Rajasthan, where 98.15%, or 5.38 crore of 5.48 crore voters are covered, the EC is yet to complete the printing of around 2.28 lakh enumeration forms.

Kerala, which was initially lagging in the distribution, has picked up pace and has covered 93.72% or 2.61 crore of 2.78 crore voters.

Puducherry has covered 94.10% or 9.61 lakh of 10.21 lakh voters.

UP quarry collapse: 3 dead, many trapped in Sonbhadra

LUCKNOW, DHNS: At least three workers were killed and over a dozen others were feared trapped after a stone quarry collapsed in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district, about 400 km from here.

According to officials, a huge chunk of rock fell on labourers engaged in "illegal" mining activities in the Billi-Markundi area in the district on Saturday.

Three bodies have so far been recovered, said sources, adding that the number of the deceased was likely to increase.

Rescue operations were underway in full swing, and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams had reached the spot from the neighbouring Mirzapur district.

Reports said that around 15 labourers were trapped under the debris, though this number could be more.

District Magistrate B N Singh said an inquiry had been ordered into the incident to ascertain how, despite the ban, mining was going on in the area.

The local police have registered a case against the company that was allegedly carrying out mining there.

BEYOND RHINOS

'Big Five' to big picture, Kaziranga goes wider

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Assam's Kaziranga is gradually moving beyond its traditional focus on the 'Big Five' wildlife, trying to highlight the richness of its wider biodiversity and offer more variety to visitors.

From birds to butterflies, frogs to fishes, and orchids to insects, the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) — spread across roughly 1,300 square kilometres on the floodplains of the Brahmaputra and the Karbi Anglong hills — is documenting and showcasing the ecological diversity available to tourists and researchers alike.

One-horned rhinos, Royal Bengal tigers, Asian elephants, swamp deer and water buffalo, popularly called the Big Five, have long dominated tourism and conservation efforts. But in recent years, park authorities have been working to promote Kaziranga's other attractions.

Kaziranga now offers safaris for birders and butterfly enthusiasts.

"Recording all kinds of species, not just the Big Five, is key to managing Kaziranga well. By highlighting the park's full range of wildlife, we gain deeper insights into its ecological richness and demonstrate why every species plays a part in keeping Kaziranga's ecosystem balanced and healthy," park director Sonali Ghosh told *DH*.

Kaziranga attracts the maximum focus of tourism in Assam as it houses the largest population of one-horned rhinos (2,613 as per the 2022 census). The park recorded its highest footfall of over 4.43 lakh tourists during 2024-25, emerging as the third most visited national park in India after Rajasthan's Ranthambore and Kerala's Periyar National Park.

Speaking about the rich variety of fish, frogs and reptiles, a park official said, "The unique richness of native species of fishes and herpetofauna highlights Kaziranga's stronghold as a pristine habitat for wild fauna. The diversity of amphibians and reptiles also serves as key indicators of ecosystem health, playing vital roles in maintaining ecological balance."

The park has also introduced specialised safaris — for birders, dolphin-watching on the Brahmaputra, and for butterfly and orchid enthusiasts.

Recently, the park introduced the Hemtap Hill trek at Silimkhuwa village in the Kaziranga–Karbi Anglong landscape.

Tamil Nadu Cong prepares for hard bargain with DMK ahead of 2026 polls

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

As Assembly elections draw near, the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) appears to be preparing the ground for a "hard bargain" and posturing with the ruling DMK over seat-sharing, as the faction-ridden unit is split into three divergent views regarding the alliance.

One faction wants the Congress to accept whatever numbers the DMK allot to them; the second wants the party to bargain for 40 to 45 seats and power sharing with the DMK; and the third wants the party to explore an electoral tie-up with Vijay's TVK, sources told *DH*.

Congress and DMK have fought every election since 2004 except the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, but the seats contested by the national party in the assembly elections have been on the decline. From 48 in 2006, the party got 63 seats in 2011, but this was reduced to 41 in 2016 and further to 25 in 2021, the lowest number the Congress has contested so far. Congress currently has 17 MLAs, and many leaders want the party's strength in the Assembly to increase by contesting more seats in the 2026 Assembly elections.

Those clamouring for the third option point to the gradual reduction of the seats to the party and DMK leaders' ignoring Congress cadres and not protecting their interests as reasons for their idea, while those rooting for the second option say the party must get the respect it deserves in the alliance.

The development comes at a time when Congress leaders are openly criticising their ally DMK in public forums and demanding more seats in the 2026 elections. The voices became louder after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi spoke to Vijay a day after a stampede at his rally in Karur on September 27 that led to the death of 41 people, to express his condolences.

It is also believed that the party has constituted a committee to meet functionaries and cadres to elicit their views on the alliance, but Tamil Nadu Congress Committee chief K Selvaperunthagai told *DH* that such a panel does not exist.

DECCAN HERALD
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A safeguard against arbitrary arrest

The Supreme Court's ruling that law enforcement authorities should furnish the grounds of arrest when a person is arrested is an affirmation of the right to freedom and personal liberty of citizens. A bench headed by Chief Justice B R Gavai said this requirement would apply not only to offences under special laws such as the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act (UAPA), but to all offences registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The Court ruled that the grounds of arrest should be communicated to the arrested person in writing, in a language he or she understands, within a reasonable time, and at least two hours before the person is produced before a magistrate for remand proceedings.

This ruling, which safeguards the liberty of individuals from arbitrary arrest, came in a 2024 hit-and-run case in Mumbai. The accused driver challenged his arrest, citing that the reason for the arrest was not given to him in writing. The Bombay High Court acknowledged the procedural lapse, but upheld the arrest, citing the gravity of the offence. The Supreme Court granted him bail on appeal without going into the merits of the case. But while examining the question of law, it considered the right to be informed of the reason for arrest. Though the right has existed as a procedure in the country's penal laws, it has hardly been respected. In the arrest of NewsClick editor Prabir Purkayastha in 2024, the Court extended this procedural safeguard to a stringent anti-terror legislation. But now, it has raised it from a procedural requirement and statutory right to a constitutional right.

The Supreme Court underlines due process by ruling that authorities must provide reasons for arrest in writing

The Court held that the requirement of informing the arrested person of the grounds of arrest, in the light of and under Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India, is not a mere formality but a mandatory constitutional safeguard. By invoking Article 22(1), the Court has placed the right in the category of fundamental rights. In a significant statement, it said failure to comply with the provision would render the arrest and subsequent remand illegal, and the person would be at liberty to be set free. The Court also prescribed a timeline to be followed and said it was a "judicious balance between safeguarding the arrestee's constitutional rights under Article 22(1) and preserving the operational continuity of criminal investigations". With the ruling, the apex court has reasserted the significance of due process by applying the principle of constitutional accountability to law enforcement.

Costly experiments, elusive clean-up

The Karnataka Cabinet's approval to procure 46 mechanical sweeping machines on a seven-year rental basis, at a total cost of Rs 613.25 crore, marks one of the costliest sanitation interventions Bengaluru has seen in recent years. The decision raises serious questions about financial prudence, technological suitability, and the government's unwillingness to learn from past mistakes. Bengaluru already operates around 26 mechanical sweepers, but their performance has been anything but reassuring. Several remain under-utilised, prone to breakdowns, or operate only on select arterial routes. Commuters routinely complain that they merely stir up dust rather than remove it, worsening air quality. Maintenance has been inconsistent, performance audits perfunctory, and there has been no credible explanation of how the new fleet will avoid the same shortcomings. The obvious question remains unanswered: why commit over Rs 600 crore to additional machines when the city has not honestly examined why the existing ones failed? Was the technology unsuitable for Bengaluru's mix of fine dust, debris and construction waste? Were contracts poorly structured? Were operators inadequately trained? Unless these issues are addressed, the new machines risk repeating old mistakes at a far higher cost.

The plan to rent mechanical sweepers for Bengaluru is short on evidence and learnings from the past

The procurement process itself has raised concerns. The original plan for 59 machines was pared down to 46 by the Urban Development Department, even as the cost per unit increased. A technical committee headed by Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation (KUIDFC) managing director R Selvamani had recommended outright purchase, supported by a separate agency for operations and maintenance. It did not endorse a rental model. Later, the Boston Consulting Group suggested a hybrid model with partial upfront payment and the remainder linked to performance per kilometre. Renting, it noted, would be costlier per vehicle. Despite this, the Cabinet chose the rental route, citing the need to avoid heavy initial expenditure. In effect, the burden has merely been deferred, not reduced.

None of this diminishes the urgency of Bengaluru's cleanliness challenges. The city struggles with roadside dust, construction waste, and debris that manual sweeping cannot manage. Mechanical sweepers may be the answer only if they suit local conditions, are maintained reliably, and are deployed effectively. Before locking itself into a seven-year rental contract worth over Rs 600 crore, the government should have conducted a transparent, evidence-based review of the current fleet's shortcomings. Bengaluru needs cleaner roads, not another costly experiment. Accountability and clarity must guide procurement, or the city risks signing away public money on machines that may once again gather more dust than they clear.

SUBTLE SHIFT, STARK IMPACT

The 'climate bill' we are paying

Extreme shifts taking place in the weather should be treated as an economic and health emergency

SWETAVALLI RAGHAVAN

When I looked back at the weather in Karnataka 10 years ago, the changes seemed almost invisible at first. In November 2015, Bengaluru was cool, rain-kissed and mild, its air scrubbed clean by an evening shower. This November, a decade later, the city feels different - warmer, stickier, more unpredictable.

The days hover around the high twenties, the nights no longer offer relief, and rain arrives in short, violent bursts rather than soft, soaking spells. The data confirms what our bodies already know.

The India Meteorological Department's long-term records show that India's mean temperature has risen steadily for more than a century, by about 0.6 to 0.7 degrees Celsius. The past fifteen years have been the hottest in recorded history, with Karnataka's once-gentle post-monsoon season now wobbling between swelter and flood.

What appears to be a small shift, a few degrees on a thermometer, a few hours of extra humidity, has enormous consequences. The climate signal is unmistakable: warmer days, hotter nights, and more erratic rain.

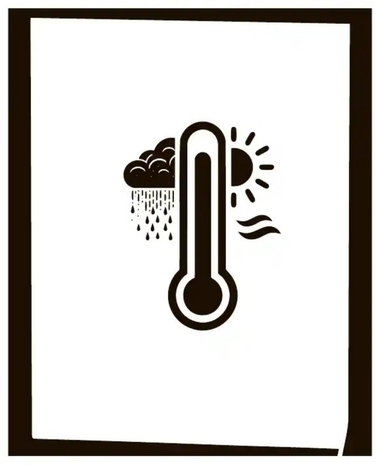
IMD analysis shows a significant increase in both mean and maximum temperatures, while rainfall patterns have grown more uneven. Across the peninsula, the balance between warmth and rainfall has fractured, and with it, a sense of normalcy.

So where did we go wrong? The answer lies in a mix of short-term thinking and long-term neglect. As a nation, we built our growth story on the back of fossil fuels and cheap energy, burning coal and petrol long after science warned us of their cost.

Our cities expanded without green buffers or proper drainage. We paved wetlands and cut trees in the name of progress, then wondered why every cloudburst brings chaos. Worse, we treated climate change as an environmental issue rather than a human one. Health, livelihoods and social protection were afterthoughts in climate planning. The result is a warming world that punishes those who did the least to cause it - the poor and the struggling middle class.

For them, climate change is not an abstract future threat; it is a daily tax on survival. Outdoor workers, such as farmers, masons, vendors, gig workers, lose hours of labour to unbearable heat. *The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change* estimates that India lost hundreds of billions of potential labour hours to extreme heat in recent years, translating into tens of billions of dollars in lost income.

For a daily-wage worker, that means meals skipped, medicines postponed, children pulled from school. For middle-class families, it means soaring electricity bills, damaged homes, disrupted



commutes and health expenses that quietly erode savings.

Erratic rainfall and rising temperatures are also reshaping food and water security.

Climate change, in short, has deepened India's inequality.

Heat that harms

The health toll is harder to ignore with each passing year. Karnataka now reports more cases of heat exhaustion, dehydration and vector-borne diseases, such as dengue and chikungunya. Rising temperatures worsen air pollution by boosting ozone formation, aggravating respiratory and cardiac diseases.

The Lancet and other medical studies have already linked hundreds of thousands of premature deaths in India to fossil-fuel pollution each year. Add the psychological stress of displacement, crop loss and uncertainty, and the mental-health burden begins to mount as well.

Economists and public health experts are now attempting to quantify what all this costs. While it is difficult to isolate the exact rise in healthcare spending caused by climate change, the direction of the trend is obvious.

Families are paying more for doctor visits, medicines and hospitalisations after heat waves and floods. Out-of-pocket medical expenses, already one of the biggest causes of debt in India, climb further when climate disasters strike.

At the national level, the loss of productivity, crop income and disease burden translates into tens to hundreds of billions of dollars in economic damage each year. The poorest households, which lack insurance or savings, absorb these shocks directly. Climate change is thus not only an ecological crisis but also an economic and health emergency.

Karnataka illustrates both the problem and the possibility of change. We have the data, the talent and the tools to adapt, but we have not yet matched them with scale or urgency. The state's weather stations and rain gauges - the very instruments that warn us of danger - have often fallen into disrepair. Heat-action plans exist on paper but remain under-funded. Urban development continues to privilege concrete over canopy. Meanwhile, public-health systems remain overstretched and underprepared for climate-linked disease.

The first step is to treat climate as a health issue, not just an environmental one. Investing in stronger primary care, resilient hospitals, early-warning systems and green urban infrastructure can save both lives and money. Cutting fossil-fuel use brings double benefits: cooler cities and cleaner lungs. Social-protection measures such as climate-indexed insurance, cooling shelters for outdoor workers, and targeted cash relief after floods can protect the vulnerable from falling deeper into poverty.

Ten Novembers ago, Karnataka's skies were gentler. Today, they reflect our collective neglect and the urgency of repair. Climate change is not creeping toward us; it is already here, in the form of higher cost of vegetables, in the extra pill for a heat-stricken parent, in the sleepless nights of a worker who cannot afford both a fan and dinner. The question is no longer whether the weather has changed. It has. The question is whether we will.

(The writer is an advisor on Antimicrobial Resistance, Government of Karnataka, and a Professor of Practice at St Joseph's University, Bengaluru)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Living on the edge

What drives F1 drivers to keep pushing limits?

VIPIN NAIR

Broken limbs and not-yet-fully mended fractures and dislocations tell the tale of many a misadventure in my youth. Thrill and fulfilment came easily; the adrenaline rush needed no big push.

Growing up in Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram) in the 1970s, death-defying stunts were the farthest from my mind. For us, heroic challenges didn't require skydiving. Attempting to climb a coconut tree - *a la* Jahnvi Kapoor - epitomised courage!

Like most children my age, sports was equated to football and cricket, we always wondered what drew people to extreme sports. We were largely oblivious to the existence of Formula 1 — an extreme sport that challenges the limits of human capabilities. Our exposure was limited to glossy photographs of tiny cars and drivers in full-body race suits in foreign magazines. Niki Lauda or Alain Prost were virtually unknown. All this changed when the charismatic Brazilian Ayrton Senna took the world by storm in the late eighties.

India waited until the mid-nineties for the live telecast of Formula 1. Slowly, small pockets of urban India — by then I had moved to Bengaluru — developed a taste for the thrill of the sport. In Bengaluru, on race day, many thronged pubs and sat transfixed to screens showing cars doing relentless laps at blinding speeds. It wasn't egalitarian like football — there were technical details and technology to absorb. By and large, it was a rich man's sport, and watching it, the pastime of the well-heeled. It also required some learning, which didn't excite me much.

Estimates today put the F1 fan base in India at a staggering 60 million, with three-fourths under the age of 35 — a far cry from the nineties.

The answer to why some take to an extreme sport, risking their lives and limbs, evaded me — until last week, when I heard Pedro De La Rosa, one of the most experienced test drivers ever.

Pedro, a Spanish veteran of over 100 Grand Prix across fifteen years, insists he has never retired from the sport — once a driver, always a driver, or so he says — and at 54 remains ready to zip just in case anyone needs him to burn the rubber. So who better to look back and tell us the draw of the sport?

"If I would have known so much as I know now when I started, I would have never become a Formula 1 driver. I think you have to be a bit naive to become a Formula 1 driver in the sense that you are very brave. You don't see anything as a problem."

Lance Stroll, the promising young talent less than half Pedro's age, who sat by his side, threw his head back, and laughed heartily, saying the older man couldn't have said it better.

The reason transcends generations — a certain inexplicable courage wrapped in naivety that nothing could go wrong is what it takes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is the opposition really listening?

The Bharatiya Janata Party and Nitish Kumar's JD(U) combine winning a historical mandate in the Bihar assembly elections, defying the anti-incumbency factor that has been at the helm in Bihar for over two decades, is a remarkable story of an enduring political saga. It also saw a 90% strike rate for the BJP and the decimation of the I.N.D.I.A bloc as a result of a well-orchestrated electoral strategy, where women, youth, and backward classes across all caste denominations voted massively for the NDA. The opposition was mauled electorally by its own contradictions, infighting, and lack of coordination, which resulted in its gloomy performance. Unfortunately, the opposition does not seem to have learned any lessons, as evident from the fact that it is again harping on 'vote chori', a negative narrative that will only boomerang its political prospects if they do not refurbish their image and emerge as an effective opposition. If this trend continues, it is unlikely that it will get any electoral dividend in future Assembly elections slated for West Bengal and Kerala. The prospect will be tougher as Bihar's election result may have a cascading effect in future elections.

H R Bapu Satyanarayana, Mysuru

Bihar's lesson

Bihar has a lesson for the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress Leader, Rahul Gandhi. He must realise that negative campaigning will not help his cause. His remarks that everything was not fair in Bihar elections from the start show his wanton misconception. He must recognise many good things about Bihar elections, such as the increased voting percentage, higher women voter turnout, and smooth conduct of elections without giving room for repolls. It is high time the opposition parties, including Congress, adopted a positive approach and played constructive politics.

V S Ganeshan, Bengaluru

Improve the quality

Apropos 'Free textbooks for students at govt PU colleges from next year' (Nov 15), while the proposal is good, it is unlikely to arrest the downward trend in admission to government PU colleges. The crux of the issue here is that students in government and government-aided schools are already provided with free textbooks, but the enrollment of students is not up to the expected level. This being the case, it would be foolhardy to expect improvement in enrollment of students in government PU colleges by providing free textbooks. Under these circumstances, providing midday meals may be contemplated to bring back students on an experimental basis. It would be prudent to find ways improving the quality of education in government schools and colleges.

H V K Bhatta, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

Tejashwi was the popular face. He got the most votes. Mahagathbandhan had a positive approach. They wanted to provide jobs and develop Bihar... The people on the other side only spoke of division and the past...

Akhilesh Yadav, SP Chief

...All of this analysis is "TBU" – true but useless.

Chip Heath

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

Fast and fatal: Crisis on roads

Traffic calming measures need to be introduced across the country urgently

GEORGE CHERIYAN

For more than a decade, overspeeding has remained the leading cause of road accidents and fatalities in India. According to the *Road Accidents in India 2023* report, overspeeding accounted for 68.4% of the 3,28,727 road accidents and 68.07% of the 1,17,682 fatalities. In 2023, an average of 13 people lost their lives every hour due to overspeeding.

Each year, when these reports are released, there is widespread hue and cry over fatalities caused by speeding and weak enforcement. However, no concrete action is taken to address the issue of overspeeding.

Enhanced penalties, intended as a deterrent for serious road traffic violations, have proved to be a total failure due to poor enforcement. Between 2020 and March 2023, traffic offences led to challans amounting to Rs 3,793 crore. Yet only Rs 269 crore was collected, a mere 7.1%. In 2024, over eight crore challans worth Rs 12,000 crore were issued across India, but nearly Rs 9,000 crore — a staggering 75% — remains unpaid. Overspeeding alone accounted for 50% of all challans issued.

Drivers believe they can flout traffic rules and get away without paying penalties, reinforcing a culture of non-compliance among motorists and vehicle owners. Though several measures have been proposed to improve challan collection, it is difficult to believe that states will enforce them sincerely or muster the political will to act.

Since road safety education has little impact on actual driving behaviour, limiting maximum speed and introducing physical measures that prevent vehicles from exceeding speed limits are the only effective solutions in India. The cornerstones of the safe system approach to road safety, which aims to ensure a secure transport system for all road users, are safe speeds, safe roads and roadsides, safe vehicles, and safe road users.

Together, they eliminate fatal crashes and reduce serious injuries.

Overspeeding significantly reduces driver control and greatly increases the likelihood of accidents and fatalities. Every 1% increase in mean speed results in a 4% rise in fatal crash risk and a 3% rise in serious crash risk. For pedestrians, the risk of death when struck by the front of a car rises sharply — by 4.5 times — when speed increases from 50 km/h to 65 km/h.

Design to slow down

Traffic calming and speed management techniques include installing physical speed-reducing measures such as narrowing roads and intersections, raised zebra crossings, speed bumps at traffic lights, roundabouts and road humps to slow down vehicles. Such measures need to be introduced across the country on an urgent basis.

In April 2018, the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways fixed the maximum speed limit at 120 km/h on expressways and 100 km/h on national highways. State and local governments have the option to fix lower speed limits than those set by the Union Ministry. Though most states have notified speed limits based on road type and vehicle category, adherence has been poor. Considering road conditions and population density, even the currently prescribed higher limits are dangerously high.

Currently, there are no uniform, data-driven scientific guidelines for determining road speed limits. Speed limits are often set arbitrarily or based on subjective judgement.

In September 2021, the Madras High Court invalidated the 2018 notification issued by the central government, which had fixed speed limits at 120 km/h on expressways, 100 km/h on national highways, and 70 km/h for M1 category vehicles.

The HC observed that overspeeding is a primary cause of accidents, resulting in numerous fatalities. Despite being aware of this fact, the government had raised speed limits for various reasons, which contributed to an increase in deaths. Consequently, the court nullified the notification. The court's observations and decision are both valid and critical.

Unfortunately, in a ruling delivered on November 30, 2024, the Supreme Court reversed the order, saying, "The courts cannot reduce the speed limit for vehicles on roads, national highways and expressways. We can't slow down the country." Since speeding continues to be the major cause of road fatalities, the SC needs to re-examine and review this order on maximum speed limits.

As the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims 2025 was observed on November 16 (the third Sunday of November) under the theme 'Lost Talents', let us take concrete action to prevent future fatalities and safeguard the lives of our young talents.

(The writer is Executive Director, Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development India)

Guarding the guardians from manufactured distrust

VANSHAJ AZAD

In recent weeks, India's judiciary has found itself drawn into an unusual public controversy, not through its judgements, but through conversations taking place outside the courtroom. Former law officers, government advisers and public commentators have begun portraying the courts as opaque, unaccountable, and self-insulating. What may appear as civic candour risks becoming something more insidious: a narrative campaign to erode the moral legitimacy of the institution that stands between citizen and State.

In a recent interview with journalist Arnab Goswami, Senior Advocate Harish Salve mounted a sharp critique of the judiciary. He questioned the Supreme Court's handling of the Justice Varma episode, asking why then Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna did not direct a criminal probe and instead dealt with the matter administratively. Yet Justice Khanna acted squarely within the in-house procedure laid down by the Court, following the law in both letter and spirit. The issue has since received judicial *quietus* in XXX vs Union of India (2025), where the Court upheld the Chief Justice's decision as constitutionally proper.

Salve also took aim at the collegium system, calling it opaque and outdated, and suggesting that no other democracy allows "judges to appoint judges". This argument was considered and decisively rejected by the Constitution Bench in the National Judicial Appointments Commission judgement (2015), which observed, "The Constitution of India has its own background and personality. Therefore, models of other countries could not be blindly followed so as to damage the identity and personality of our Constitution." To revive this debate through televised soundbites risks flattening a constitutional dialogue into populist critique.

The interview also touched upon former Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud's recent interaction with the *BBC*, which both Salve and the host termed reflective of a 'colonial mindset'. The suggestion that speaking to a British journalist undermines national dignity borders on the parochial. The medium cannot taint the message. Judges, like all constitutional actors, retain freedom of expression. To presume impropriety in dialogue is to mistake silence for virtue and transparency for transgression.

Not long ago, the Union government's economic adviser, Sanjeev Sanyal, criticised the judiciary for its "My Lord culture", long vacations, and alleged inefficiency. What may sound like concern over judicial delay – a genuine problem in a country weighed down by pendency – takes on a different hue when voiced by a senior government official. It reads less as critique and more as derision, a slow erosion of institutional dignity. Seen alongside similar remarks from former law officers, it suggests a broader effort to normalise distrust and weaken faith in the judiciary.

As Sun Tzu wrote in *The Art of War*, "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting." The same strategy is unfolding today: not through confrontation, but corrosion – persuading citizens that the institution meant to protect them has failed and that only a "new order" can restore justice. Power, he observed, triumphs first in perception before it does on the battlefield. In politics too, institutions are seldom dismantled by force; they are hollowed out by doubt.

The recent spate of attacks on the judiciary, wrapped in the language of reform, reflects this ancient strategy. When those once entrusted with defending the institution begin portraying it as corrupt or unaccountable, the battle for legitimacy is already half lost.

This war of perception poses a grave threat to constitutional democracy. Once the judiciary is seen as part of the problem rather than the guarantor of solutions, power tilts dangerously toward the executive. The Court's strength rests on faith; if that belief is undermined, even the strongest judgements will be drowned out by orchestrated outrage.

History and literature remind us that empires seldom fall by conquest, but by belief. In George R R Martin's *Game of Thrones*, Robert Baratheon's rebellion was waged on a lie that Prince Rhaegar Targaryen had abducted Robert's betrothed, Lyanna Stark. Outrage spread faster than truth, uniting kingdoms around illusion. When the truth emerged that there had been no abduction, an entire order lay in ruins.

B R Ambedkar warned the Constituent Assembly that liberty would be lost "in the hands of the legislature itself" unless the judiciary stood as a sentinel against excess. He saw the courts as "the sentinel on the *qui vive*", ever watchful against power's overreach. The endurance of democracy, he cautioned, depends not only on the virtue of rulers but on the vigilance of judges.

In a republic governed by law, criticism of the judiciary is not blasphemy; it is a democratic necessity. But critique must come from good faith, not from the art of war. The true test of leadership lies not in tearing institutions down but in reforming them without breaking their spirit. If Caesar's wife must be above suspicion, then the Republic must be above manipulation. So, if we do not speak for the judiciary today, we may find that tomorrow, there is no one left to speak for us.

(The writer is a law clerk-cum research associate at the Supreme Court of India)

There's big money in sending poor workers abroad. Kenya's low-cost, high-volume labour strategy is endangering the very workers now propping up its finances

JUSTIN SCHECK AND ABDI LATIF DAHIR

Students at a training centre for domestic workers to be sent abroad in Nairobi, Kenya. President William Ruto functions as an arm of a staffing industry that sends poor workers abroad in droves while affording them little to no protections. NYT

Kenya's key export used to be coffee. Now it's labour

For years, Kenya's most important export was coffee. Today, it is workers.

Remittances from Kenyans abroad now account for a bigger share of the Kenyan economy than coffee or tea, the country's president, William Ruto, likes to say.

The New York Times spent over a year investigating the abuse that Kenyan housekeepers and nannies face while working in Saudi Arabia. Hundreds of women have been killed. Women describe being raped and beaten.

The two industries provide insight into how Ruto views workers. When it comes to coffee, his government is investing in the industry so its beans can be marketed and sold at a premium.

With workers, he's doing the opposite, positioning them as among the cheapest on the market. That, we found, has contributed to the abuse.

Here's how to understand the economics of it all.

Kenya's financial crisis

Ruto was elected president in 2022 with a promise to revitalise the country's economy. Three years later, the government is broke, debt is soaring and opportunities at home for the country's growing youth population have not materialised.

With young people braving police bullets to protest corruption, high prices and joblessness since 2023, Ruto has become desperate for a financial fix.

He has focused on two priorities: creating jobs and generating revenue.

Labour exports as a fix

Sending more workers abroad creates jobs and pumps money into Kenya's economy. Saudi Arabia is the top market. Even low-skilled jobs there pay far more than most people can earn in rural Kenya.

Workers send much of their income home for their families to spend.

To expand that cash flow, Ruto announced a goal of sending 1 million people abroad every year, more than doubling the current rate.

That was despite well-documented risks. For years, journalists, human rights groups and unions have detailed the abuse that many workers endure in Saudi Arabia. Women have been beaten, raped, locked indoors and thrown from balconies. Abusers often go unpunished. The Kenyan parliament has debated how better to protect them. But employment companies have persuaded the government to scale back the already scant protections. Kenyan maids working in Saudi Arabia had their passports confiscated, wages denied and food withheld. Some were beaten by their bosses for offenses as minor as not knowing how to operate a washing machine. Others were killed.

Instead of demanding that the Saudi government protect these women, President William Ruto of Kenya pledged to send even more workers to Saudi Arabia, more quickly and less prepared than before. And he instituted policies that made it more profitable for employment companies to do just that.

Ruto, a wealthy politician and businessperson, has cultivated an international image as a Pan-African leader. At the White House last year, President Joe Biden hailed his commitment to improving the lives of the poor. Ruto often invokes his own climb from poverty, vowing to fix an economy that had left so many others behind.

But today in Kenya, a *New York Times* investigation found, Ruto's government functions as an arm of a staffing industry that sends poor workers abroad in droves. Politicians started their own employment companies to capitalise on the boom, and the government rolled back worker protections, maximising industry profits.

Lots of developing nations send workers to the Persian Gulf. Ruto's government has built an entire economic policy around it. He proudly notes that remittances are now a bigger share of Kenya's economy than tea and coffee, historically its most important exports.

Other nations have successfully pressed Saudi Arabia for stronger worker protections and increased wages. Kenya has not. Ruto's government has positioned Kenyans as among the cheapest, least-protected workers in the marketplace.

Low cost, high volume

Kenya is a relative latecomer to the Saudi foreign-worker market. Other countries, most notably the Philippines, started sending workers years earlier. To get an edge on established competitors, the Kenyan government is pursuing a discount strategy.

Saudi Arabia doesn't have the same minimum wage for all foreign workers. Rather, it negotiates the terms of employment with governments individually.

Under Kenya's deal with Saudi Arabia, a Kenyan household worker gets paid about 40% less than a Filipino worker doing the same job. Kenyans also have fewer resources to return home in the case of an emergency.

Ruto's labour secretary told the *Times* that Kenya cannot force Saudi Arabia to change its terms. He said Kenya could not push too hard for higher wages because employers might hire cheaper workers elsewhere.

Ruto's strategy is built on volume — sending more Kenyans abroad for less pay and without holding out for better conditions.

Preserving profits

To hit its export goals, Ruto's government is relying on 700 or so staffing companies that recruit employees for overseas work.

Those companies follow the low-price, high-volume strategy set by the government. They find workers and sell their contracts to Saudi agencies, which assign them to work in homes. The workers are often described as live-in maids, but they have a range of duties, including cooking and caring for children.

For every worker it sends abroad, a Kenyan company makes about $1,000. From that, companies must deduct airfare, health checks, passport fees and government-mandated training.

The government used to require a 26-day course that was supposed to teach workers how to use kitchen appliances, speak a bit of Arabic, cope in an emergency and know their rights. The programme cost about $200 per worker.

Government reviews found that training inadequate, and parliament considered expanding it. But the recruiting companies complained to the government about the increased expense.

Last year, Ruto's government said that it would require just 14 days of training. It capped the cost at around $100 per worker.

To understand what that means for a recruiting company, consider Glenn Heights, a company owned by a man who also serves as a government appointee.

In October, Glenn Heights advertised 3,000 job openings in Saudi Arabia. By halving the cost of training for each worker, the new government policy will save the company $300,000 once those jobs are filled.

A favour to the powerful

Lobbyists told the *Times* that persuading the government to change the training requirements was made easier because so many government officials and their families had stakes in the industry.

"They will help us because it is their business," said Patrick Mburu, vice chair of the Kenya Association of Private Employment Agencies.

The Times' investigation found that about 10% of Kenya's labour export companies were owned by people with political connections, including the solicitor general and the government spokesperson. Lobbyists said the number was certainly higher because so many officials owned companies under other names.

Ruto's family also profits. His wife and daughter are major shareholders in the industry's dominant insurance company. Lobbyists say the government steers the staffing companies to buy their policies there — a claim the government denied and the company said it was unaware of.

With millions of Kenyans underemployed, there's no better way for politicians to get support than to offer jobs to constituents. This system helps maintain Ruto's coalition by rewarding loyal politicians. And it turns politicians into recruiters.

The New York Times

Borrowed notes, missing credit

CHAITRA H G

Recently, the Delhi High Court set aside the interim injunction against A R Rahman in the copyright dispute over the song *Veera Raja Veera*. The plaintiff, the Dagar family, had alleged that the song copied their *Dhrupad* composition *Shiva Stuti*. The Court found, however, that their evidence—largely stage performances—did not conclusively prove authorship of the specific composition.

In classical music, where oral tradition prevails, performance alone cannot establish copyright. The court clarified that the burden of proof rests entirely on the plaintiff, who failed to produce concrete evidence of authorship. The absence of contradictory material does not validate ownership claims. The court also noted that classical compositions are often rooted in traditional *ragas* and *taals*, which belong to the public domain and cannot be monopolised. Hence, Rahman and the producers are not currently obliged to provide credit or compensation until the issue is settled.

The central question remains: Is *Veera Raja Veera* a copy, an interpretation, or simply inspired by the Dagar Brothers' *Shiva Stuti*? Do the Dagars hold rights merely because they performed it decades ago? A similar debate surrounds the song *Varaha Roopam* from the film *Kantara*, which closely resembles a composition by Thaikkudam Bridge. To the average listener, such songs may sound almost identical, while trained musicians can often discern subtle differences in notes and *swaras*. Yet copyright disputes are not judged by popular opinion. Courts may acknowledge similarities but decide strictly according to law.

This exposes the grey zones and loopholes in copyright law that some composers—knowingly or otherwise—might exploit. Two songs may sound nearly the same, yet slight variations in melody, rhythm, or arrangement may be enough for a court to consider one "original." Copyright law also excludes "inspiration" from infringement, complicating matters further. In classical and semi-classical genres, the question of ownership is particularly ambiguous. Can one truly claim authorship over a *raga*-based composition or a traditional piece transmitted orally through generations? In Hindustani classical music, many compositions share *ragas* and *talas*, differing only slightly in lyrics or ornamentation. Each *gharana* often presents its own variation of the same composition. Fortunately, the works of saints such as Tyagaraja and Purandaradasa in Karnatic music belong to the public domain. Yet one worries that a time might come when even such classical treasures are contested as private property.

The ethical question also looms: Is it fair for celebrated composers to borrow traditional melodies without acknowledgment? In Rahman's case, even if the Dagars cannot legally prove authorship, a simple acknowledgement of inspiration would have demonstrated humility and respect for the classical tradition. This concern is not limited to Rahman—many prominent composers, including Pritam, Anu Malik, Hamsalekha, R D Burman, and Ilayaraja, have faced similar accusations of uncredited borrowing. Though legal proof is elusive, many listeners find such practices disappointing.

In the film industry, commercial success often overshadows ethical considerations. Whether a song is copied, inspired, or original, once it resonates with the audience, it is celebrated. But does escaping legal scrutiny justify copying others' work? While film music thrives on creativity and mass appeal, ignoring ethical accountability erodes artistic integrity. Copying without acknowledgement distorts cultural heritage and undermines respect for original creators. The law may permit such actions through technicalities, but from the standpoint of fairness and musicianship, they remain troubling.

Balancing creativity with ethics ensures that inspiration does not turn into exploitation. When composers credit their influences, they enrich the cultural dialogue rather than diminish it. Interestingly, this contemporary debate echoes India's historical experience of forced musical fusion. During the Mughal and Sultanate eras, the blending of Hindu, Persian, and Arabic musical traditions—often under royal patronage—produced new forms such as *khayal*, which now dominates Hindustani classical music. This fusion, though artistically fruitful, emerged largely from power dynamics and cultural control. People had no choice but to accept these as symbols of projected harmony. Similarly, today's audiences have limited agency in accepting trends shaped by powerful film industries and market forces.

In both past and present, those at the top often decide what becomes 'acceptable'. Thus, while musical blending is often beneficial, the ethics of attribution must evolve alongside it.

The *Veera Raja Veera* controversy is more than a legal dispute; it reflects a broader tension between law, creativity, and ethics. Copyright may protect form, but not always the soul of art. As audiences and artists, we must advocate for a culture in which inspiration is celebrated, but honesty and respect remain non-negotiable.

(The writer is a state award-winning playback singer, actor, engineer, and former national medallist in gymnastics and fencing)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: NOVEMBER 1975

Pai wants ban on urban bank loans

New Delhi, November 16
Industry Minister T. A. Pai today suggested a statutory ban on lending banks in urban areas so as to divert more funds to the rural sector to help control sweeping inflation. He regretted that despite the nationalisation of banks, their operations continued to be urban-oriented and the vast majority of the rural sector remained starved of finances affecting agricultural operations. He said the bankers need to have a "missionary zeal" to mobilise the resources for the small and marginal farmers.

25 YEARS AGO: NOVEMBER 2000

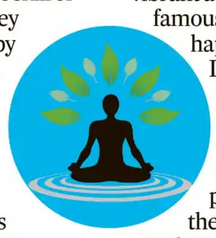
Raj returns to a hero's welcome

Bangalore, Nov 16
Kannada matinee idol Dr Rajkumar returned to Bangalore this morning to a tumultuous welcome by fans and well-wishers, while a relieved Chief Minister SM Krishna announced that he was restoring Dr Raj to the people of Kannada Nadu. Though tanned and fatigued with three months of captivity in inhospitable conditions in the wilderness, the veteran actor was very much in command. He said it was up to the Government to decide on granting amnesty to his captor Veerappan or launching operations to nab the bandit.

OASIS | NAJIB SHAH

The RICH theory of happiness

There is a RICH theory of happiness. RICH being an acronym for Resources, Intimacy, Competence, and Health. These characteristics are said to define psychological health, which is said to be synonymous with happiness. And who can argue with this? The theory is that these factors are interconnected and contribute collectively to the well-being of an individual, which in turn will trigger happiness. How many are fortunate to have all four of these features in their lives? So, what happens to the millions who do not have resources? Whose life is a grind as they struggle to make ends meet? Lives which do not have any meaningful relationships, where loneliness eats them? Or who are not competent in any worthwhile skill or whose health is poor? Are they condemned to being unhappy and sad? The world, after all, does have more such large numbers of people who face failure in some or all of the four attributes and struggle through life – are they doomed to unhappiness as defined by this yardstick?



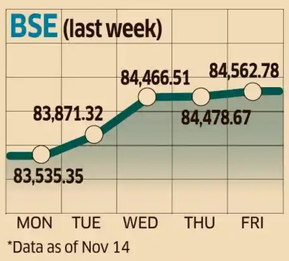
Undoubtedly money helps – but the million-dollar question is how much? And does the pursuit of money lead to increased happiness? You have but to walk down very many of our shanties and slums to experience the sheer vibrant atmosphere. Thomas Jefferson famously included the 'pursuit of happiness' as a noble goal in the Declaration of Independence. Americans, as much as the rest of the world, have since discovered that happiness can be very elusive – and the pursuit of happiness is one of the main reasons for much of the unhappiness in the world.

Aristippus, a Greek philosopher, claimed that happiness was the sum of life's 'hedonic moments'. Aristotle said that a life truly worth living is one that produces *eudaimonia*, the feeling of being 'watched over by a good angel'. Happiness in either case is subjective. You can be a millionaire and be unhappy; you can be undergoing therapy and yet be positive and happy. In both cases it is attitude which makes the difference. An attitude which accepts the vicissitudes and challenges of life without ever losing hope, never falling prey to envy, having faith in God and in one's own abilities, furnishing the innate good which each of us has and consciously doing the right thing, helping others wherever one can and spreading happiness. Ultimately this is the surest path to happiness.

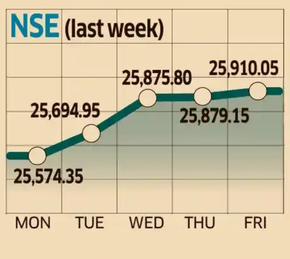
DH BUSINESS

DECCAN HERALD
Monday
November 17, 2025

BSE (last week)



NSE (last week)



*Data as of Nov 14

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
ASIANPAINTS	10.99%	TRENT	-5.09%
HCL TECH	5.40%	BAJFINANCE	-4.54%
BHARTI AIRTL	4.88%	TATASTEEL	-4.02%
ADANIPORTS	4.34%	TMPV	-3.46%
TCS	3.76%	BAJAJFINSV	-1.91%

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
ASIANPAINTS	11.19%	TRENT LTD	-5.10%
INDUSINDBANK	6.40%	BAJFINANCE	-4.51%
ADANI ENT	6.22%	TATA STEEL	-3.92%
HCL TECH	5.44%	TMPV	-3.57%
JIO FINANCIAL	5.21%	APOLLO HOSP	-2.90%

Sensex (52-week)

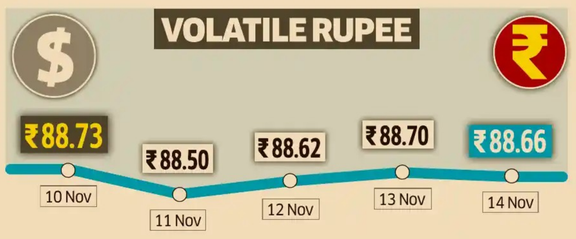
Nov 14, 2024	Nov 14, 2025	
77,580.31	84,562.78	9.00%

Nifty (52-week)

Nov 14, 2024	Nov 14, 2025	
23,532.70	25,910.05	10.10%

10-year Bond yield 6.52%

VOLATILE RUPEE



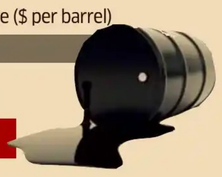
Exchange Rates*

Dollar	₹88.66	SGD	₹68.26
Pound	₹116.71	Yen (100 units)	₹57.44
Euro	₹103.31		

*Price at which banks sell

Crude Oil Rate ($ per barrel)

BRENT CRUDE
$64.39*
2.19%
*Rate as of Nov 14



Bengaluru fuel pump price*

(Retail)
Petrol* ₹102.92 ₹0%
Diesel* ₹90.99 ₹0%

*Rates as of Nov 14 #Rate change compared with yesterday

Commodity watch

COFFEE

Category	Rate (Rs per 50 kg)*
Arabica Parchment	₹26250 - 27000
Arabica Cherry	₹13800 - 15500
Robusta Parchment	₹16500 - 17000
Robusta Cherry	₹10400 - 11250

*Rates as on Nov 13

Other Commodities

Silkworm cocoon (Rs per kg)*

Bivoltine (BV)	₹733
Cross Breed (CB)	₹682

*Average rates as on Nov 14

SBI backs another wave of bank mergers

The government is discussing options to create large state lenders to fund infra projects

BLOOMBERG

State Bank of India is supportive of another wave of mergers among state-backed lenders as policymakers explore ways to build scale and finance growth in the world's fastest-growing major economy.

"Some further rationalisation might make sense. There are still some smaller, sub-scale banks," Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Chairman of the country's biggest bank, said in an interview with Bloomberg News in Mumbai. "If another round happens, it may not be a bad idea," he said.

Mumbai-based SBI controls about one quarter of India's Rs 194 trillion ($2.18 trillion) loan market. A wave of local mergers over the past decade has left 12 state lenders competing with private and foreign players such as HDFC Bank Ltd. and HSBC Holdings Plc. With a balance sheet of $787 billion, SBI dominates the industry, along with its more than 22,500 branches and over 500 million customers.

India is discussing options to create large state lenders, which aligns with the government's need to fund massive infrastructure and industrial projects in Asia's third-largest economy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target to transform India into a developed economy by 2047. That vision requires bank financing to increase to about 130% of gross domestic product from 56% currently, supporting an expected ten-fold increase in GDP to roughly $30 trillion.

Currently, only SBI and HDFC Bank rank in the top 100 global sector list by total assets. China and the US have rivals among the 10 biggest, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

While China and India have been saddled with some of the steepest US tariffs under President Donald Trump, New Delhi is undertaking reforms including tax cuts to lure foreign investments and take advantage of a rejig in global supply chains.

Setty, who took the top job at the bank in late 2024, said that though exports had been impacted by additional US tariffs, SBI is yet to see major issues in any sector. "We are not pruning any exposure, we continue to support exporters. If any temporary adjustments or facility extensions are needed, we're addressing those," he said.

SBI, which is 55%-owned by the government, is seeing signs of an industry-wide revival of capital spending by corporates but pricing for loans is becoming tighter. "There are many banks looking to build corporate portfolios, but only a limited number of large corporates—so that segment will remain highly competitive," said Setty. Last month, the lender raised its forecast for credit growth to 12% to 14% for its current year from a previous guidance of 11% to 12%.

One of Setty's key tasks after the coronavirus lockdown was to head recovery of SBI's nearly $20 billion bad-loan pile.

According to Setty, SBI is keen to expand its market share further. "Even as a dominant player, our approach isn't about defending market share but acquiring more," he said, adding that he doesn't see competition from foreign capital as a threat. The firm has total assets of nearly 69 trillion, with HDFC Bank taking the second spot at Rs 40 trillion.

SBI Chairman Challa Sreenivasulu Setty.

A wave of billion-dollar deals in India's banking sector has put the financial sector in the global spotlight as investors seek opportunities in the country. This builds on the momentum of foreign players investing in insurance and fintech firms. SBI's shares have gained 19% over the past one year versus a 16% increase in the Nifty Bank index.

At the same time, authorities have proposed a framework enabling lenders to directly fund corporate takeovers, a move expected to boost the country's $40 billion-plus deals market. The draft guidelines ensure that no bank will have excessive exposure to M&A lending, according to Setty.

"As for pricing, I expect some softening since more players, especially Indian lenders with access to lower-cost funds, will enter this space, he said. "However, M&A financing shouldn't be treated like simple balance sheet funding. Each deal carries distinct risks, and pricing should reflect that, Setty said.

As the country becomes a global hotspot for wealth management, banks are ramping up offerings and hiring aggressively to meet booming demand on the back of robust equity markets and real estate transactions. The firm hired 1,000 wealth relationship managers over the last 12 months, said Setty, adding that 2,000 roles were created internally to cater to its wealth customers.

Setty said the financier has identified more than 110 micro-markets, mostly located in India's metro and large urban centres, where it has opened so-called wealth hubs for clients. It plans to add another 50 to 100 hubs over the next two years.

Akshayakalpa Organic plans foray into Maharashtra

Readies plan to invest Rs 200 crore to set up new organic milk dairy; eyes IPO in 2030

MAHESH KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Organic dairy company Akshayakalpa Organic is planning an aggressive expansion into the Maharashtra market, after establishing a strong presence in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. Accordingly, it is investing Rs 200 crore to set up a new organic milk dairy in Mawal, located between Pune and Mumbai, which will be ready in the next two years.

"We started working in Maharashtra close to a year ago. Already, we have planned to invest around Rs 200 crore in the next two years. We are looking at launching our products in November 2026. Initially, the milk will go from Hyderabad. Then we will start producing milk there in 2028," Akshayakalpa Organic Co-founder & CEO Shashi Kumar told *DH*.

Following the success of its high-protein paneer, launched earlier this year, the company introduced its high-protein organic milk recently.

Shashi Kumar said the company has enough capital to oversee its Maharashtra expansion. "We are very well-capitalised. We raised around Rs 100 crore primary capital this year. In 2023, we raised a lot of money. Also, we mobilised close to around Rs 100 crore bank debt. So that is keeping us going. Virtually, we are not burning money now," he said, adding, "We are a profitable company. I just need money for expansion. I don't need money for burning capital."

Shashi Kumar said the company possesses a cash reserve of Rs 300 crore, which will be utilised to fund the expansion in Maharashtra.

The organic dairy player turned positive during the first half of this year. In FY25, the company reported a topline of Rs 363 crore, and it expects to close FY26 with a topline of close to Rs 600 crore, with an EBITDA of 10% and 2% PAT, he added.

The company intends to tap the capital market with its IPO in 2030. "My shareholders are telling me to do it much earlier, by 2028. We will take a call later," he said.

During the previous year, Akshayakalpa has managed to enroll around 150 farmers in Maharashtra, who are currently undergoing the organic certification programme. It is a 3-year journey, before they turn organic. "Our plan is to get at least 10,000-15,000 litres of organic milk a day by 2028, so that we start selling in the Mumbai-Pune market," he said.

Currently, Akshayakalpa produces 70,000 litres of organic milk per day, from 2,200 farmers in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. The majority of the production comes from farmers in Karnataka.

Accordingly, Akshayakalpa has helped farmers increase their monthly income to Rs 1,28,000 per month, from just around Rs 10,000, a month earlier. "Our aim now is to help farmers increase their monthly income to Rs 2 lakh and above. Our R&D unit is working in this direction," Shashi Kumar stated.

Shashi Kumar, CEO & Co-Founder, Akshayakalpa Organic

Wonderla eyes expansion to Delhi-NCR, Mumbai

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Amusement park chain Wonderla Holidays, which has completed 25 years of operations, will open its Chennai park next month. About Rs 600 crore investment has gone into this new park, and the company is also planning to expand to newer Tier-1 locations, such as Delhi and Mumbai.

"We are looking at Delhi-NCR and Mumbai. We are also talking to different state governments to see whether we can firm up something, and are awaiting a response from them," Wonderla Holidays Ltd Executive Chairman and Managing Director Arun Chittilappilly told *DH*.

"Also, we hope that by next year, our Bhubaneswar park, which we opened last year, will become profitable. I think next year will be good for us. We will consolidate a lot of our investments and also look for new opportunities to see how we can grow faster," he added.

Wonderla Holidays Executive Chairman and MD Arun Chittilappilly.

Wonderla's total income in the second quarter ended September 2025, stood at Rs 8,852 lakh, up 24% y-o-y. It also saw record footfalls of 5.05 lakh during the quarter. While the Bengaluru park witnessed 1.96 lakh footfalls, Kochi, Hyderabad, and Bhubaneswar saw 1.92 lakh, 0.93 lakh, and 0.24 lakh, respectively. In India, the amusement park business remains at a nascent stage. "India doesn't have too many players and the problem here is real estate. Land acquisition remains the biggest challenge. Another issue is import duties, as there are technologies that need to be imported," he informed. "The industry is still developing, and there are many opportunities to grow. India has about 150 amusement parks. When people start consuming more and are also willing to spend more on entertainment, the industry will begin to witness growth," he added.

Currently, the GST rate on admission to amusement parks is 18%. Chittilappilly said, "This '18%' is still too high. It used to be 28% because it was clubbed with all the other sin taxes. Ideally, it should be around 10%, because that's a good global standard of taxation. For consumption items, 18% for luxury is okay. But for our industry, it is not a necessity, but it is definitely not a luxury."

He also stressed on the need for more clarity on safety protocols, even for small operators. "The lack of proper safety guidelines is another big challenge. Larger players obviously follow safety norms. We don't take any shortcuts when it comes to safety or investing in new technology. But smaller players tend to not do that, thereby creating a negative impact for the industry as a whole. There is a need for proper safety guidelines and also support from the government, because this industry is a very high-cap one, with a long gestation period. Even abroad, it takes several years to build a big amusement park. Every new park has to ensure that it creates its own customer base, so it takes a lot of time to build a profitable business," he said.

Wonderla, which opened its park in Bengaluru in 2005, recently launched a new water-themed resort—The Isle. "We are doing about 65% occupancy. We have practically sold out most weekends. The new concept of a water-themed resort is what we wanted to do, because we already have a history of doing water-based attractions, so this was easy for us," Chittilappilly concluded.

Hudco looking to raise $1 b by March: CMD

NEW DELHI, PTI: State-owned infra financing institution Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd (Hudco) is in talks with multilateral development banks, including ADB, and institutions to mobilise $1 billion to fund infra projects in the country, its Chairman and Managing Director Sanjay Kulshreshta said.

"We are in advanced discussion with KfW (German development bank) to raise $200 million," he said.

Besides, the company is in talks with multilateral development banks like the Asian Development Bank for a loan of $500 million and $200-300 million from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in the current fiscal, he said. "We are hoping to finalise these fundraises of about $1 billion during the current fiscal for on-lending to infrastructure projects," he added.

Foreign funding will not only diversify the resource-raising stream, but also bring down the cost of funds, he said. Further elaborating on HUDCO's initiative to achieve better cost efficiencies, he said, the company has been authorised by the government to issue 54 EC Capital Gain Bonds, and it has mobilised Rs 50 crore so far this year. The maiden 54 EC Capital Gain Bonds issued by the company carried a coupon rate of 5.39%.

DH INTERVIEW

'In 2-3 yrs, India will have a fully-domestic solar manufacturing chain'

NASDAQ-listed leading decarbonisation solutions company, ReNew Energy Global Plc, last week announced that it will invest Rs 60,000 crore ($6.7 billion) in Andhra Pradesh, to set up multiple green energy projects in the state, taking its total fresh investment in AP to Rs 82,000 crore ($9.3 billion). In an exclusive interview with *DH*'s **SNV Sudhir**, ReNew Energy Founder, Chairman and CEO **Sumant Sinha** lays out his company's ambitious future plans, and also hopes that over 2-3 years, India will have a fully-domestic solar manufacturing chain, the only country besides China to have it, positioning the country as a major alternative supplier globally. Edited *Excerpts:*

Could you tell us about the MOUs and their significance?

We have signed MOUs amounting to Rs 82,000 crore with Andhra Pradesh. There are several components to the agreements — a wind-solar-battery hybrid project in Anantapur, with a peak capacity of close to 5 GW; an ingot wafer plant; a pump storage project; and a green hydrogen hub we plan to set up. The combined investment is Rs 82,000 crore, which will be split among the various projects. The funds are expected to be deployed over 4-5 years, subject to necessary government approvals and procedures.

Why did ReNew choose Andhra Pradesh for these investments?

Andhra Pradesh offers strong wind and solar natural resources, yet relatively low penetration of renewable projects so far. In addition, the leadership, namely Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and IT, Electronics and Communication Minister Nara Lokesh, have been remarkably supportive. We've received assurances for fast-track approvals, single-window clearance, and readily available representatives in Delhi for assistance. Their responsiveness regarding land allocations and incentive announcements has been reassuring, making AP an attractive place to do business.

How much land will be required for the Rs 82,000-crore investments?

The requirements vary greatly between projects. Manufacturing, solar, and pumped hydro — each needs very distinct types of land. It's difficult to provide a specific number due to these differences.

Out of the Rs 82,000 crore, how much has already been executed in May?

No, these projects have not been executed earlier. There is one that started a few months ago, for which the foundation stone was laid by Nara Lokesh. That project is worth about Rs 20,000 crore, but the rest have been newly announced.

Sumant Sinha

Could you elaborate on your overall plans for the Indian market and solar manufacturing?

India now has surplus module manufacturing capacity of around 100 GW, versus current demand of about 50 GW. For cells, imports will be stopped from June next year, and we're ramping up our cell manufacturing (currently 2.5 GW, expanding to 6.5 GW). Modules are balanced at 6.5 GW for us. The government plans to stop wafer imports by 2028, making it necessary to set up domestic wafer production, and Andhra Pradesh is our chosen location. No one in India currently manufactures wafers, but capacity will be added progressively as import restrictions begin. As for balancing demand and supply, it will never be perfect due to various delays and market factors, but over 2-3 years, India will have a fully domestic solar manufacturing chain, the only country apart from China to have it, positioning the country as the major alternative supplier globally.

Is ReNew seeing demand for clean energy from data centres and other new sectors?

Yes, emerging sectors like data centres are creating new demand for clean energy. We're in discussions with some companies about their specifications for power quality and flexibility, and we'll see what tailored solutions we can provide.

What are ReNew's plans concerning green hydrogen and the carbon market?

We are actively developing a green hydrogen hub in Andhra Pradesh. Global and domestic demand for green fuels is still limited due to higher costs, compared to conventional (grey) hydrogen and ammonia. The industry is preparing for future demand, with capex investments to follow as market growth justifies it.

What other plans does ReNew have beyond the announced investments?

As a public company, full details of future plans require formal disclosure to investors. But we have about 8 GW of Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) signed, in addition to our currently commissioned projects, and another 6.5 GW of LOAs awaiting conversion to PPAs. Some of this capacity is part of the Rs 82,000 crore investments for AP, while some will be developed in other states.

TOP PICKS

The data is sourced from Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited

Ashok Leyland
(ID: ASHOKLEY)
BUY
Upside +11%**
Last close ₹148
Target: ₹165*

Jindal Stainless
(ID: JSL)
BUY
Upside +18%**
Last close ₹737
Target: ₹870*

KEC International
(ID: KEC)
BUY
Upside +16%**
Last close ₹792
Target: ₹920*

Safari Industries
(ID: SAFARI)
BUY
Upside +20%**
Last close ₹2,244
Target: ₹2,700*

Max Fin Services
(ID: MFSL)
BUY
Upside +25%**
Last close ₹1,683
Target: ₹2,100*

* Target price has been calculated on the basis of fundamentals ** Upside refers to more value stock is expected to generate than its current price

DIY retirement planning vs EPFO: What is better

ANUBHAV SRIVASTAVA
MANAGING PARTNER, ARYZEN CAPITAL ADVISORS

For decades, the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) has been the quiet backbone of India's retirement savings. Contributions arrive automatically, interest compounds invisibly, and the government stands behind it all. It is the default plan for those who would rather not think about retirement until it arrives. But the rise of low-cost index funds, international ETFs, and gold ETFs has made investors wonder: could a "do-it-yourself" plan, diversified (global, and liquid) actually do better than EPFO's structured safety net? What is "better" anyway? When tested, the results were instructive.

Two Roads to the Same Goal, with a rider: Given the long term nature of pensions (or even financial planning), modelling the two paths over 15 years, and adjusting all outcomes for 5% annual inflation yields a roughly 50% increase in purchasing power assuming an 8.25% annual compounding. Whereas a well-diversified portfolio (Equities, Metals, International equities, bonds) increases expected (average) outcome to a likely one hundred percent increase, adjusted for mean inflation. However, the dispersion is wide and expected given the nature of markets: they do not promise; they distribute probabilities.

Now this is all well and good but what about the downside? Especially market crashes which, given recent experiences as more a question of when rather than if of the time horizon? Simulating a "stress test" that is to say, a two-year global meltdown: Indian equities fall 30%, US markets 25%, gold rallies modestly, debt holds steady. The Fifteen-year average DIY corpus, in the simulation, was still 70% up in real terms bettering EPF's 50% but the median will be slightly lower. It is important to note such bad-luck scenarios will hurt early, though most recovered fully by the end of the horizon.

So, what is the lesson? It is certainly not that EPF beats equities or vice versa. It is that risk comes in two forms: EPF will contain policy risk i.e., slow, bureaucratic, and usually reversible (interest-rate tweaks, contribution caps, or withdrawal restrictions). DIY portfolios, on the other hand, carry market risk effects of which can be swift, visible, and emotionally demanding. Both can reduce expected returns temporarily. But while policy risk limits upside gently, market risk expands both tails: higher gains, but also deeper drawdowns.

This brings us to the question, what is better? The short answer is it depends on savings and future earnings time and amount.

For someone at say age 45, with Rs 1 crore in EPF today, compounding alone can build a comfortable pension base by age 60. Adding further contributions, it could double in real terms.

A DIY portfolio, conversely, if maintained through volatility, can deliver 25–30% higher expected wealth, but it demands three things EPF does not: Discipline to stay invested through downturns. Panic and euphoria are both detrimental to preferred outcomes in a DIY scenario. Diversification across assets and geographies. Such longer term portfolios suffer if exposed to concentration. Lastly, periodic rebalancing, the quiet, unglamorous habit which keeps risk in check. One needs to balance the needs to stay away from frequent trading and take advantage of market movements while keeping an eye on tax implications.

The worst mistake is premature withdrawal from either the EPF account or the DIY portfolio. Both strategies collapse if investors were to interrupt compounding.

The Middle Path: The practical answer is not an either/or. Retaining EPF as a safe core, earning tax-free, stable returns and building a satellite of market-linked assets around it to hedge inflation and rupee depreciation risk is the wise option, naturally tailored to one's specific needs.

This blend gives what no single system can: the calm of certainty and the growth of participation. Risk cannot be eliminated; it can only be chosen wisely.

So, if planning retirement, ask not "EPF or DIY?" ask how much uncertainty one can live with. Because safety, beyond a point, carries its own cost.

(This analysis is for educational purposes only. Investors should consult a qualified registered financial advisor before making investment decisions.)

Trozo set to launch AI-driven platform

Trozo co-founders, from left: Janardhan JV, Pavan Govindan and Dilip Adiga.

MAHESH KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru-based deep tech engagement platform, Trozo, is set to launch its AI-driven engagement solutions and a consumer app that serves as a unified rewards and loyalty wallet in the next quarter.

The AI startup is currently onboarding over 100 brands across lifestyle segments — F&B, fashion, d2c, travel and retail.

Trozo has raised its seed fund from Startfresh Ventures, a new-age AIF fund focused on deep tech, consumer, and green energy. It now aims to provide consumers a platform to redeem their loyalty points at different brand outlets or restaurants.

"Fundamentally, when a customer goes to any retail outlet for shopping or restaurant for meals, he/she earns loyalty points. But both the customers often fail to redeem those points within a stipulated timeframe, and brands are unable to make the former come back to them. Our AI-enabled product enables customers to redeem their loyalty points at multiple brand outlets, and restaurants," Trozo co-founder Pavan Govindan told *DH*.

The company has successfully conducted a pilot run of its product at many outlets and is now all set to replicate it in multiple brand outlets. "We will soon go for a pre-Series A round to raise a much bigger fund to scale our business," Govindan said.

The company aims to hire engineering talent from Tier-2 cities like Udupi.

Govindan said the company is integrating various brands and restaurants so that the unutilised loyalty points can be redeemed. "We are enabling the customers and brands to re-engage with each other," he said.

Brands are able to see that their customers are returning to them frequently.

Trozo has launched its pilot with select brands in Bengaluru and it aims to establish its product firmly before going to other cities, he added.

India's loyalty and consumer engagement market is valued at $4.3 billion in 2025, and projected to reach $17.1 billion by 2035. With over 4,000 crore points issued annually and nearly 15,000 crore points lying unused in consumer wallets, the space holds immense untapped potential.

Trozo also seeks to redefine how rewards are used, enabling consumers to seamlessly redeem points for exciting offers or even use them as a form of digital currency for payments.

The startup is backed by industry leaders like Fractal Group CFO Ashwath Bhat, Bosch Asia Pacific South President Vijay Ratnaparkhe, Coto Founder and CEO and Ex Zee5 CEO Tarun Katial.

A smart portfolio strategy via passive ETFs

Different sectors tend to do well at various time periods based on a host of factors

CHINTAN HARIA

At any point in time, there are segments that are favoured by the markets and those that are shunned. A host of micro and macroeconomic, industry and company-level factors, apart from government policies tend to dictate sectors that would do well. Global factors, geopolitics, trade tariffs and FPI flows also tend to dictate index movements.

Markets now have to contend with positive and negative factors in the current times. Penal trade tariffs levied by the US, geopolitical tensions, and curbs on H-1B visas are adverse factors. Income tax reductions, GST reforms, government's renewed spending on infrastructure, and low inflation are beneficial factors.

Different sectors tend to do well at various time periods based on a host of factors. Investing in sectors or themes most suited for a particular macro environment can be rewarding. More so, when done via various domestic ETFs (exchange traded funds), which offer exposure to different segments (market cap-based, smart beta, thematic, etc.) of the market at low costs, with adequate liquidity while being traded in the exchanges.

For retail investors, making the connect between macro factors and market movements, greed and fear, and rebalancing their portfolio along with tax optimisation are challenges.

Therefore, investing in a fund that invests in a combination of passive ETFs and juggles their weightage based on market/macro conditions may ensure optimal risk-adjusted performance for retail investors.

Investor challenges

Consumer durables was the top performing sector in 2015, 2017 and 2019. Healthcare was the topper in 2020 and 2024. Financial services is shining thus far in 2025. Auto was the leader in 2023, while IT made it to the top in 2018. Power was the best returning sector in 2021 and 2022.

The point is that sector performances vary and winners tend to differ each year. A confluence of factors – inflation, interest rates, corporate earnings, government policies, market liquidity, global factors and geopolitical tensions – is at play.

Making the connect between these factors with individual segment to spot winners is extremely challenging for retail investors due to resource (skillset, knowledge, etc.) and time constraints.

Controlling the behavioural aspects – greed and fear – is a major challenge while making investment decisions.

From April 2014 to April 2015, the inflows into the pharma industry increased by a robust 57%. It was an overheated segment at that time and greed ruled the roost. In the next three years (April 2015-April 2018), the Nifty Healthcare index delivered -10.75% CAGR, that is compounded negative returns.

In 2013, India faced a weak macro environment with high fiscal and current account deficits, record inflation, depreciating currency, heavy corporate leverage and the like. Fear was excessive among investors. Most of them missed the stellar rally in the FMCG sector from early 2013 to late 2015.

Finally, there is the aspect of being able to device an exit strategy and rebalance your portfolio depending on the market situation. This process, again, is quite challenging for retail investors to execute.

Taking the fund route

Investing in a specific theme and/or sector ETFs that track various related indices is the simplest way for investors to gain from market movements. It is cost-efficient due to the low expense ratio of these ETFs. Also, since units are actively traded in the BSE and NSE, buying and selling trades are easy with reasonable liquidity.

A mix of these ETFs can create a diversified portfolio for investors over the long term.

However, there is a challenge in this process, too. How do investors choose which ETFs to invest in and also the suitable weightage, apart from deciding the rebalancing strategy? That's precisely the problem a fund that invests in these ETFs seeks to solve.

A fund of funds that invests only in ETFs would be a passive strategy solution.

Based on macro trends that are monitored closely along with internal models, the fund manager would identify suitable passive ETFs that track specific sectors or themes. Then suitable weightages are assigned to the underlying ETFs by the fund manager.

With periodic monitoring, the portfolio is rebalanced as and when required.

(The writer is with ICICI Prudential AMC)

Mcap of eight of top-10 valued firms jumps Rs 2.05 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, PTI : The combined market valuation of eight of the top 10 most-valued companies surged by Rs 2,05,185.08 crore last week, with Bharti Airtel and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainers.

Last week, the BSE Sensex appreciated by 1,346.5 points, or 1.62 per cent, and the NSE Nifty rose 417.75 points, or 1.64 per cent. Markets staged a strong rebound during the week, ending firmly in the green after the recent phase of weakness.

The market capitalisation of Bharti Airtel surged by Rs 55,652.54 crore to Rs 11,96,700.84 crore. Reliance Industries Ltd's market valuation jumped by Rs 54,941.84 crore to Rs 20,55,379.61 crore. The mcap of TCS zoomed by Rs 40,757.75 crore to Rs 11,23,416.17 crore and that of ICICI Bank climbed by Rs 20,834.35 crore to Rs 9,80,374.43 crore.

WEEK AHEAD

Equities likely to maintain up-move

Strong mandate for NDA in Bihar to aid momentum

SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA

Indian equities are likely to maintain their steady up-move this week, supported by firm domestic macros, healthy earnings and a strong electoral mandate for the ruling NDA in Bihar, which reinforces political stability at the Centre. While global cues remain mixed, easing domestic inflation and renewed progress on India–US trade discussions provide additional support for market sentiment.

With the earnings season concluding, market attention will shift toward broader domestic themes—including early signs of a demand pickup from the festive and wedding season, the evolving interest-rate trajectory, and prospects of higher capital expenditure through the second half of the fiscal year. The reopening of the US government and improving global risk appetite add to the supportive backdrop. Sectorally, information technology, metals, and capital-market-linked names may remain in focus, aided by improving earnings visibility, favourable policy signals, and steady domestic liquidity.

Key events this week, include the UK and Eurozone CPI prints, the US FOMC minutes, and global manufacturing data, which will guide expectations around the pace of global monetary easing.

Last week, Nifty gained 1.6% amid supportive global cues and broad-based domestic optimism. The Nifty Midcap100 and Smallcap100 indices gained 1.6% and 1%, respectively, highlighting strength in the broader market. IT led the upmove with a 3.6% weekly gain as easing concerns around US visa norms lifted demand visibility. Pharma advanced 2.9% supported by strong quarterly results, while infrastructure rose 2.4% on healthy order inflows. The auto sector gained 2% as demand trends continued to improve. Metals were buoyed by firm global prices, driven by tight supply conditions and steady industrial activity. Capital-market-linked stocks also remained active, supported by strong retail participation, elevated SIP flows, and enthusiasm for recent and upcoming IPOs.

Macro trends remained favourable as retail inflation eased sharply to 0.25% in October, well below the RBI's comfort range, aided by GST rationalisation and moderating food prices. The sharper-than-expected decline strengthened expectations of potential policy easing in the months ahead. Policy momentum also improved, with the Cabinet Committee approving a six-year Export Promotion Mission with an outlay of Rs 25,060 crore—including Rs 20,000 crore dedicated to strengthening the credit-guarantee framework for exporters—to enhance MSME competitiveness and streamline export financing.

Adding to the positive backdrop, Goldman Sachs upgraded India to 'Overweight' from 'Neutral', reversing its October 2024 stance, and assigned a FY26 Nifty target of 29,000, implying about 14% upside. The upgrade reflects strengthening earnings momentum and policy tailwinds, including prospective rate cuts, liquidity easing, bank deregulation, GST rationalisation, and progress on fiscal consolidation.

On the trade front, the United States has softened its stand on India over trade tariffs, marking renewed progress in trade discussions, which are expected to conclude before the end of the year.

Capital-market activity remained robust, with total market turnover rising 16% Month over Month in October and ADTO at Rs 507 trillion, driven by a 16% jump in F&O notional volumes and a 19% rise in options-premium turnover. Commodity turnover surged 36% MoM to a record Rs 152.5 trillion. Demat additions improved to 3 million, IPO fund-raising touched Rs 408 billion, and mutual-fund MAAUM (+2.6% MoM) alongside record SIP inflows of Rs 295 billion reached new highs—reinforcing strong retail participation across exchanges, brokerages, and AMCs.

Overall, equities are likely to continue their gradual up-move, with strong liquidity and stable fundamentals anchoring the outlook. Easing inflation, improving policy signals, and supportive domestic cues continue to reinforce confidence in India's macro stability.

(The writer is Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited)

DH REVIEW

OnePlus 15: Solid performer in a minimalistic form factor

ROHIT KVN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Last week, OnePlus unveiled its flagship OnePlus 15 series in India. It is touted to be the most durable and performance-oriented smartphone from OnePlus to date.

Design and Build

The OnePlus 15 adopts a minimalistic yet premium aesthetic.

On the back, it flaunts a curved-square camera island that houses three sensors and an LED flash. The trademark OnePlus logo is now bigger and has been moved to the centre.

Our review unit is a Sand Storm variant. The company has used industry-first Micro Arc Oxidation (MAO) technology to offer a natural, smooth ceramic-like texture to the phone.

Crafted with aerospace-grade nano ceramic metal alloy, the chassis is 1.34 times sturdier than titanium and 3.4 times stronger than aluminium, making it the most durable OnePlus phone to date. Other colour options include Infinite Black and Ultraviolet.

The phone boasts IP68, IP69, and IP69K certifications, capable of surviving two metres underwater for 30 minutes and tolerating high-pressure, 80°C water jets.

Corning's Gorilla Glass Victus 2 protects the 6.82-inch 1.5K OLED display, while Gorilla Glass 7i shields the rear panel. Further, a soft silicone case, which comes bundled free with the retail package, can guard the device against getting dents during a hard fall on the floor.

OnePlus has replaced the iconic alert slider with the Plus Key. It can be programmed to perform functions like DND, camera launch, screenshot shortcut, voice memo, torch, and Mind Space AI.

The device features super-slim 1.15 mm bezels and 90.8% screen-to-body ratio. The OLED display supports 1–120 Hz refresh rate (165 Hz during gaming), Dolby Vision, HDR10+, HDR Vivid, and offers peak brightness of 1,800 nits. It is perfect for multimedia consumption and playing games.

Colours: Infinite black, ultraviolet and sand storm
Processor: Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Elite Gen 5
Variants: 12GB RAM + 256GB storage and 16GB RAM + 512GB storage
Price: Starts at Rs 72,999

The in-screen ultrasonic fingerprint scanner works reliably. Performance Powered by the 3 nm class Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Elite Gen 5 chipset, the OnePlus 15 can deliver 20% faster performance and 35% better efficiency over its predecessor.

The OP Gaming Core technology and the 360 Cryo-Velocity Cooling System—featuring a 5,731 mm² vapour chamber, aerogel cooling, and the graphite layer— ensures the device doesn't overheat and remains stable at native 165 fps while playing games indoors.

It can also handle all generative Artificial Intelligence (gen AI) applications and tools smoothly. The device runs Android-based OxygenOS 16 with refreshing customisation options to deliver an enhanced user experience.

OnePlus promises four years of OS updates and six years of security patches.

It has a very large battery capacity of 7,300 mAh, almost 22% more than the predecessor. It can easily last more than a day under normal usage. It supports super-fast 120W wired charging and 50W wireless fast charging.

Camera System

OnePlus 15 houses a feature-rich triple-camera array includes a 50MP main sensor (Sony IMX906, f/1.8, OIS), a 50MP ultra-wide (116° FOV, f/2.0), and a 50MP 3.5x periscope telephoto (JN5, f/2.8, OIS).

Powered by the DetailMax Engine, OnePlus 15s camera delivers impressive results in varied lighting. The device also supports 3.5x optical and 7x lossless zoom.

Besides Portrait mode, it supports Underwater mode, and users can use volume keys as shutter control. It can record high-quality 8K videos at 30fps and 4K Dolby Vision HDR at 120fps.

The 32MP (Sony IMX709 sensor) does a fine job capturing sharp selfies and is capable of recording 4K videos at 60fps.

Final thoughts

The device is pricier than its predecessor, but it is a worthy upgrade for users of OnePlus 12 or older models.

OnePlus 15 excels in design, performance, decent camera, offers long battery life and supports super fast charging capabilities.

CJI Gavai backs exclusion of creamy layer in quota to Scheduled Castes

Says children of an IAS officer cannot be compared to those of a poor labourer

AMARAVATI, PTI

Chief Justice of India BR Gavai on Sunday affirmed that he is still for the exclusion of the creamy layer in reservations to the Scheduled Castes.

Addressing a programme "India and the Living Indian Constitution at 75 Years", Gavai opined that the children of an IAS officer cannot be equated with the offspring of a poor agricultural labourer when it comes to reservations.

"I also went further and took a view that the concept of creamy layer, as has been found in the judgment of Indra Sawhney (vs Union of India & Others). What is applicable to the Other Backward Classes should also be made applicable to the Scheduled Castes, though my judgment has been widely criticised on that issue," Gavai said.

CJI Gavai

"But I still hold that judges are not supposed to normally justify their judgments, and I still have about a week to go (retirement)," Justice Gavai further said.

The CJI said over the years, equality or women empowerment is gaining momentum in the country, and the discrimination, which was meted out to them, was strongly criticised.

He said that before he ends his journey as the Chief Justice in a couple of days, the last function that he attended happened to be again at Amaravati of Andhra Pradesh, while the first one after becoming the CJI was at his native place in Maharashtra's Amravati.

Justice Gavai observed in 2024 that states must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation.

Asserting that the Indian Constitution is not "static", Justice Gavai said Dr BR Ambedkar always considered that it has to be evolving, organic, and a state-of-the-art living document as Article 368 provides for the amendment of the Constitution.

"On one hand Dr Ambedkar was criticised that the powers to amend the Constitution are too liberal, and on the other hand, it was criticised that some of the amendments require ratification by half of the states, and two-third majority of the parliament, and it was difficult to achieve an amendment in this manner," the CJI said.

3 Naxals with Rs 15-lakh bounty killed in Ch'garh encounter

SUKMA (CHHATTISGARH), PTI: Three Naxalites, carrying a collective reward of Rs 15 lakh, were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Sunday, police said.

The gunfight broke out in the forested hills of Tumalpad village in the morning when a team of District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-Naxalite operation. They had inputs about the presence of Maoist cadres in the region, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said.

The intermittent exchange of fire lasted for a long time, following which bodies of three Naxalites, including two women, were recovered from the spot, he said, adding that a .303 rifle, Barrel Grenade Launchers (BGLs), other weapons and explosives were also seized from the encounter site.

The killed ultras were identified as area committee member Madvi Deva, CNM (Chetna Natya Mandli- a cultural outfit of Maoists) commander Podiam Gangi and Kistaram area committee member Sodhi Gangi, both women, Chavan said, adding they all carried a reward of Rs 5 lakh each.

Deva, a sniper specialist and a dreaded member of the Konta area committee of Maoists, was involved in the murder of several innocent civilians, the official said.

Ladakh bodies to table fresh draft of demands before Centre

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Nearly two months after Leh was rocked by deadly violence, killing four civilians and injuring dozens, Ladakh's two powerful civil society blocs, the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), have shifted from street pressure to structured negotiation.

The groups have now finalised a fresh joint charter of demands for the Ministry of Home Affairs, marking the first concrete movement since tensions erupted in September.

The document, prepared after a round of talks held late last month, is set to be emailed to the MHA on Sunday and will be made public soon after. The Centre had asked the twin bodies to submit a detailed written draft before the next meeting, reviving a dialogue that had stalled for months.

LAB co-chairman Chering Dorjay Lakruk said the new draft was finalised after several internal consultations. "After several rounds of talks within the LAB and then with the KDA, the document has been drafted. It is a joint draft from Leh and Kargil," he told reporters.

According to sources, the revised document outlines four principal demands: statehood for Ladakh, Sixth Schedule constitutional safeguards, release of all detainees arrested after the September 24 violence, and statutory guarantees for political representation, land rights, jobs, and cultural protection.

The groups have framed these demands in the context of deepening public anxiety since Ladakh's separation from J&K and its conversion into a Union Territory.

A major emphasis in the draft is the fallout from the September clashes, which the groups say exposed the fragility of institutional trust in Ladakh. The detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk is referenced as an incident that crystallised fears over civil liberties and the handling of dissent.

Sabarimala opens for annual pilgrimage amid intensifying gold-heist investigation

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

The Sabarimala Ayyappa temple in Kerala opened for its two-month-long annual pilgrimage on Sunday evening, even as the probe into the temple gold-heist case is at its peak.

Members of the Kerala High Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) reached the temple on Sunday to conduct scientific examinations of the gold plating sponsored by Bengaluru-based businessman Malayali Unnikrishnan Potti, who has already been arrested in connection with the case.

Experts are expected to carry out the examination on Monday to determine the purity and quantity of the gold used for the plating.

Although the examination had initially been planned before the temple opened, the temple tantri advised that it be held only after the Deva Anujna (divine permission) ritual, as the gold plating is considered the property of the deity.

Meanwhile, several former senior officials of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), who have been named as accused in the gold-heist cases, are likely to be arrested soon.

The temple opened at 5 pm on Sunday, and new chief priest ED Prasad assumed charge. Devotees are being allowed entry from Monday.

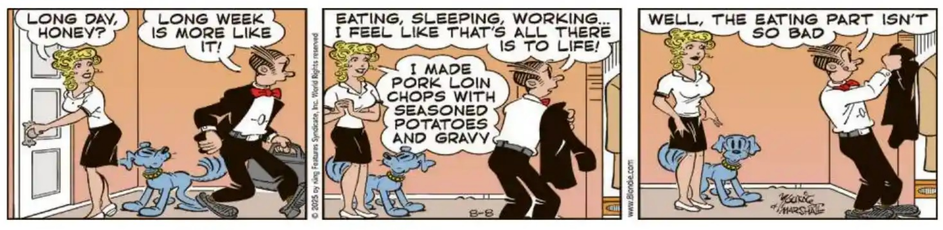
Newly appointed TDB president K Jayakumar was also at Sabarimala to review preparations. He told reporters that strict background checks would be conducted on all future sponsors offering donations or gold-related work for the temple.

Former board president P Prasant is also likely to face scrutiny, as irregularities were found in the decision to entrust Potti once again with the gold covering of two Dwarapalaka idols in September.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie


LONG DAY, HONEY?
LONG WEEK IS MORE LIKE IT!
EATING, SLEEPING, WORKING... I FEEL LIKE THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO LIFE!
I MADE PORK LOIN CHOPS WITH SEASONED POTATOES AND GRAVY
WELL, THE EATING PART ISN'T SO BAD

Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

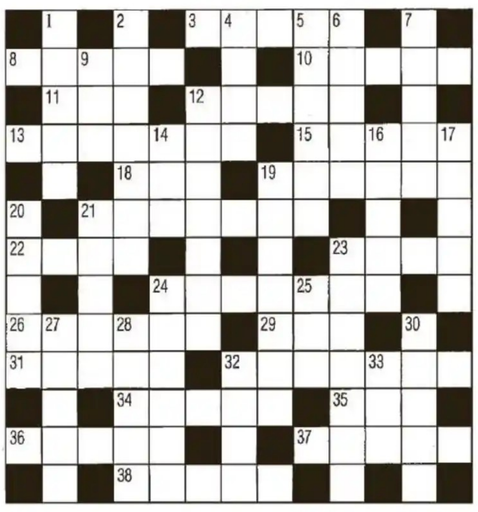
DARN, THERE GOES OUR 4TH. ARE YOU A GOLFER, PRIVATE?
SURE, I WORKED AT A GOLF COURSE
THAT'S YOUR BAG?
YES, I WAS THE RETRIEVER AT THE SILVERMINE COUNTRY CLUB

Peanuts

YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE ME FISHING? THAT'S GREAT! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT FISHING
WELL, WHAT WE'LL DO IS, WE'LL GO DOWN ON THE DOCK, AND SEE IF THERE ARE ANY FISH IN THE LAKE, AND THEN...
I SEE ONE!
YOU JUST PADDLE AROUND THERE AWHILE, AND I'LL EXPLAIN ABOUT THESE POLES...

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12289



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
3 Do but cast suspicion (5)
8 A water conveyance (5)
10 Like ancient CID figures? (5)
11 Start the car up after tea, maybe (3)
12 Not much fight (5)
13 An occurrence in a quiet setting, maybe like heaven (7)
15 Unusually good purse, possibly (5)
18 Much reduced fare (3)
19 Hope to rise to a high position in the church? (6)
21 Frank's policy (7)
22 Assert to be right on the way (4)
23 Is this house shut up? (4)
24 Learned writers, but they still use a crib (7)
26 A warm place on hot ground (6)
29 Stick to Stewart (3)
31 Nears a more sensible arrangement (5)
32 Defunct deity with a straight face (7)
34 Numerous keys can be confused (5)
35 Left the thing to be illuminated (3)
36 It can put you in the shade (5)
37 Little men in Regent Street (5)
38 Check the dodgy outer parts looking unhealthy (5)

DOWN
1 Steps taken by experts with happy heart (5)
2 Desire what proof he could provide (4,3)
4 That anguished cry when kicked into touch? (4)
5 Asinine utterance about a ship being flashy (6)
6 Give that bit extra to a youngster (3,2)
7 Hesitate to be a flag bearer? (5)
9 A diminutive and informal boss (3)
12 Be lengthened, as a sentence (7)
14 Little girl, yet a grandmother! (3)
16 From which gas or smoke may emerge (5)
17 Relaxes in a forest stream (5)
19 Maybe it rated being dressed up (7)
20 Many new hats suit a head for figures! (5)
21 One tough enough to get his master to chicken out? (2-3)
23 Went around selling things (on a bike?) (7)
24 For a short way, take the bus or walk (6)
25 Snake boasting no ability to hurt (3)
27 In front of the clock (5)
28 Uncle's about to sum up (5)
30 Dotty teetotaller immersed in water! (5)
32 Act up repeatedly (4)
33 Security device used in camping (3)

ACROSS
3 Shock, dismay (5)
8 Discourage (5)
10 Flies high (5)
11 Decompose (3)
12 Singlets (5)
13 Very bad (7)
15 Picture puzzle (5)
18 Register, record (3)
19 Exhibit, flaunt (6)
21 Book collection (7)
22 At the summit (4)
23 Furniture item (4)
24 Photographer (7)
26 Evoke (6)
29 Pelvis (3)
31 Neighbourhood pub (5)
32 Indicates, designates (7)
34 Post off (5)
35 So or thus (3)
36 Clean feathers (5)
37 Take away (5)
38 Thieve (5)

DOWN
1 Doing words (5)
2 Allow to escape (3,4)
4 Pare (4)
5 Out of the correct path (6)
6 Defeated competitor (5)
7 Deliberate deceit (5)
9 Plaything (3)
12 Tramp (7)
14 Angry crowd (3)
16 Bread maker (5)
17 Looks for (5)
19 Seer (7)
20 Ship of the desert (5)
21 Reasoned thought (5)
23 Down payment (7)
24 Noiseless (6)
25 Narrow brooch (3)
27 Truck (5)
28 Takes an interest in (5)
30 Happen again (5)
32 Prima donna (4)
33 Metallic element (3)

SOLUTIONS TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2654

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1 Scruple, 5 Ageless, 9 Relieve, 10 Leisure, 11 Taint, 12 To the good, 13 High-flown, 15 Miser, 16 Local, 18 Dreamland, 21 Walk on air, 24 Ruins, 25 Earnest, 26 Genuine, 27 Swelter, 28 Draught.

DOWN: 1 Scratch, 2 Rolling, 3 Plentiful, 4 Eject, 5 All at once, 6 Elite, 7 Emulous, 8 Slender, 14 Old master, 15 Memoranda, 16 Lawless, 17 Calorie, 19 Abiding, 20 Dessert, 22 Overt, 23 Rigid.

◆SU-DO-KU-6753◆

		7						
9	4					1		
			5		4		9	
				7	9		8	4
		3				2		
4	8		1	6				
	1		8		3			
		8					3	2
						6		

hard

SOLUTION TO 6752

7	1	6	5	8	4	9	2	3
8	2	4	9	3	6	1	7	5
3	9	5	2	1	7	8	4	6
2	5	1	4	9	3	6	8	7
9	4	7	6	5	8	3	1	2
6	3	8	1	7	2	5	9	4
4	6	3	8	2	9	7	5	1
5	7	9	3	4	1	2	6	8
1	8	2	7	6	5	4	3	9

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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							RACK 1
E1	T1	N1	B3	A1	A1	E1	
							RACK 2
I1	Y4	R1	L1	T1	A1	E1	Triple Word Score
							RACK 3
D2	A1	E1	D2	N1	N1	L1	
							RACK 4
C3	T1	O1	M3	E1	O1	U1	4th Letter Double

PAR SCORE 105-115
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

T1	E1	Q10	U1	I1	L1	A1	RACK 1 =	86
H4	A1	T1	P3	I1	N1		RACK 2 =	33
V4	O1	O1	D2	O1	O1	S1	RACK 3 =	61
M3	A1	R1	K5	E1	D2		RACK 4 =	13
							JUDD'S TOTAL	193

PAR SCORE 125-135

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

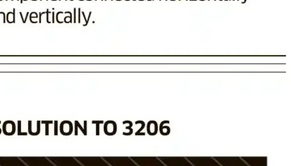
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DUTIA

MOYEN

GUDTRE

SECCAS


A club will give you a flush!
A jack of clubs will give me a royal flush!
Looks like you're in luck! Here it is!
TO GET A ROYAL FLUSH PLAYING POKER, YOU JUST HAVE TO GET CARDS THAT ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: MOVIE WORLD BUDGET MONKEY
Answer: When the car was being interrogated by the police, — IT BROKE DOWN

HITORI-3207

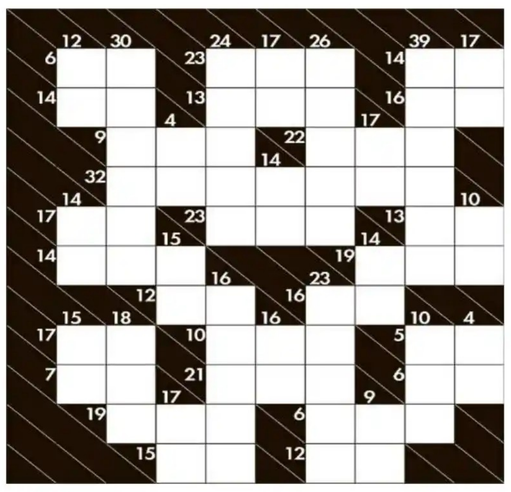
2	6	4	5	3	1	5	5
7	5	6	1	2	2	5	3
5	7	8	5	5	2	2	4
1	3	7	5	8	6	4	1
2	2	2	4	6	5	5	8
4	5	3	2	5	8	6	1
8	2	1	6	4	3	1	6
6	4	5	3	2	5	8	7

SOLUTION TO 3206

5	2	7	3	■	1	■	4
■	8	■	2	5	6	4	7
4	1	8	■	2	7	■	6
■	4	■	5	7	■	2	■
3	7	4	6	■	2	1	8
6	3	■	8	4	5	■	1
7	■	2	4	8	■	3	■
2	6	■	1	3	8	7	5

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

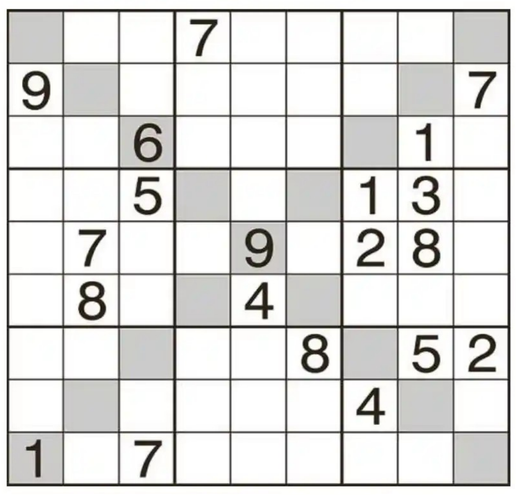
KAKURO- 3207



SOLUTION TO 3206

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3738



SOLUTION TO 3737

3	7	8	9	2	5	6	4	1
6	2	9	1	3	4	7	5	8
1	4	5	6	8	7	9	2	3
2	9	1	4	5	8	3	7	6
5	8	4	3	7	6	1	9	2
7	6	3	2	9	1	4	8	5
9	1	6	5	4	2	8	3	7
8	3	2	7	1	9	5	6	4
4	5	7	8	6	3	2	1	9

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Trump bought at least $82 mn in bonds in 5 weeks, filings show

Disclosure reveals new investments in sectors benefiting from his policies

Donald Trump. REUTERS FILE

BUYING SPREE

- Trump carried out more than 175 financial purchases from August 28 through October 2
- Disclosures, made under a 1978 transparency law called the Ethics in Government Act, do not list exact amounts for each purchase, only providing a broad range

WASHINGTON, REUTERS

US President Donald Trump bought at least $82 million in corporate and municipal bonds from late August to early October including new investments in sectors benefiting from his policies, financial disclosures made public on Saturday showed.

According to the forms released by the US Office of Government Ethics, Trump carried out more than 175 financial purchases from August 28 through October 2. The disclosures, made under a 1978 transparency law called the Ethics in Government Act, do not list exact amounts for each purchase, only providing a broad range.

The maximum total value of the bond purchases exceeded $337 million, according to the filings.

Most of the assets listed in Saturday's disclosures consist of bonds issued by municipalities, states, counties, school districts and other entities with ties to public agencies.

Trump's new bond investments span several industries, including sectors that have already benefited, or are benefiting, from his administration's policy changes such as financial deregulation.

Corporate bonds acquired by Trump include offerings from chipmakers such as Broadcom and Qualcomm; tech companies such as Meta Platforms; retailers such as Home Depot and CVS Health ; and Wall Street banks such as Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley. Purchases of the debt of investment banks in late August included bonds of JP Morgan. On Friday, Trump asked the US Justice Department to investigate JP Morgan over its ties to the late financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The bank has said it regrets its past ties with Epstein and did not help him commit "heinous acts."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday. The administration has said before that Trump has continued to file mandatory disclosures about his investments but that neither he nor his family has a role in running the portfolio, which is managed by a third-party financial institution.

UK to make refugee status temporary in policy overhaul

Wait for permanent settlement will be quadrupled to 20 yrs

LONDON, REUTERS

Britain said it would make refugee status temporary and the wait for permanent settlement would be quadrupled to 20 years under the country's most sweeping overhaul of policy on asylum seekers in modern times.

The Labour government has been hardening its immigration policies, above all on illegal small-boat crossings from France, in efforts to stem the soaring popularity of the populist Reform UK party, which has driven the immigration agenda.

The government said it would take inspiration from Denmark's approach, one of the toughest in Europe - where growing anti-immigrant sentiment has led to increased restrictions in many countries - and widely criticised by rights groups.

As part of the changes, the statutory duty to provide support to certain asylum seekers, including housing and weekly allowances, will be revoked, the Home Office (interior ministry) said in a statement issued late on Saturday.

The department, led by Shabana Mahmood, said the measures would apply to asylum seekers who can work but choose not to, and to those who break the law. It said that taxpayer-funded support would be prioritised for those contributing to the economy and local communities.

Illegal migration tearing UK apart: Mahmood

Illegal immigration is tearing Britain apart and tougher measures such as an extended waiting period of 20 years for refugees to acquire permanent residency are required to unite the country, UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said on Sunday, reports PTI.

Nepal EC publishes poll schedule

KATHMANDU, PTI: The Election Commission of Nepal on Sunday published the schedule for the parliamentary election to be held in March.

The candidates will have to file nomination for the election to the House of Representatives from 10 am to 6 pm on January 20, according to a notice published by the Election Commission.

The list of the candidates will be published on the same day after 5 pm. The time for registering protest against any candidate is fixed from 10 am till 3 pm on January 21.

The verified list of candidates will be published the next day.

Those wishing to withdraw their candidacy can do so till 1 pm on January 23. The final list of candidates will then be published on the same day within 3 pm and the election symbol will be officially allotted to the candidates.

The election will be held on March 5. The voting will start at 7 am and end at 5 pm, according to the Election Commission.

As per the Nepalese constitution, 165 members of the House of Representatives are elected through first past the post procedure or direct method.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Demonstrators clash with police outside the National Palace in Mexico City during a protest against insecurity and corruption. Over 100 people were injured and 20 arrested as protesters denounced the president's handling of violent crime. REUTES

B'desh steps up security ahead of tribunal verdict against Hasina

▸ Security agencies are on high alert in Bangladesh ahead of a special tribunal's verdict in a case against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina over alleged crimes against humanity committed during the anti-government protests last year, reports PTI from Dhaka.

"The law enforcement agencies have already completed their necessary preparations" to prevent unpleasant events across the country, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury was quoted as saying by the state-run BSS news agency.

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) will deliver the verdict against 78-year-old Hasina on Monday.

Hasina, her home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and then inspector general of police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun were accused of committing crimes under five counts, with the first one alleging the defendants of murder, attempted murder, torture, and other inhumane acts.

DR Congo mine collapse kills 32

▸ A bridge collapsed at a cobalt mine in southeast Democratic Republic of Congo killing at least 32 wildcat miners, a regional government official said on Sunday, reports AFP from Lubumbashi.

The bridge came down Saturday onto a flooded zone at the mine in Lualaba province, Roy Kaumba Mayonde, the provincial interior minister, told reporters. He said 32 bodies had been recovered and more were being searched for.

The DRC produces more than 70 percent of the world supply of cobalt, which is essential for batteries used in electric cars, many laptop computers and mobile phones.

More than 200,000 people are estimated to be working in giant illegal cobalt mines in the giant central African country.

Local authorities said the bridge collapsed at the Kalando mine, about 42 kilometres (26 miles) southeast of the Lualaba provincial capital, Kolwezi.

Russia, US actively discussing Ukraine settlement: Kremlin aide

MOSCOW, PTI: A top Kremlin aide on Sunday said that the conclusions of the Alaska summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump were communicated to Kyiv, adding that Moscow is maintaining contacts with Washington on the issue.

Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov said Russia is actively maintaining contacts with the US to seek peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis on the basis of understandings reached during the Alaska summit between Putin and Trump on August 15.The two leaders had not reached a deal to end conflict on August 15.

"We are actively discussing a Ukrainian settlement based on the understandings reached in Anchorage. We believe this is a truly good path to achieving a peaceful settlement," Ushakov said.

COP30 mulls new document on fossil fuel by Oct 2026

BELEM (BRAZIL), PTI

As hectic deliberations marked the first week of the annual climate change summit, COP30 President Andre Correa do Lago said the deliberations may come out with a new document on fossil fuel that is likely to present a roadmap for transition into a cleaner mode.

However, there is a lack of in-depth data regarding fossil fuel and more information on the subject is needed before coming out with anything concrete, Lago told a press conference late Saturday night here.

Although the fossil fuel roadmap is not in the formal agenda of COP30 Climate Summit here, it is being talked about by major parties after Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva spoke about it in his opening statement. "The roadmap does not need to be supportive or not supportive. It is a document... the COP30 has to present the roadmap," Lago said when asked if any roadmap is being discussed by the parties during the ongoing deliberations.

Negotiators from more than 190 countries have gathered here for the annual Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The COP30 summit is taking place at the Brazilian city of Belem.

Lago commented that some "very positive comments" were heard during the negotiations and all in a way agreed to work on it in the coming period.

"We also had very clear comments that this is not a negotiated outcome, this is not a documented outcome that needs to be approved, or a document that enters into negotiation.

"This roadmap is made for negotiators, for delegations to know about all the elements that we could raise during that effort," Lago said.

Talking about any documented roadmap, the COP30 president said that most of the parties feel there is inadequate data on implications of fossil fuel and the way ahead.

SPORT

Trevor-ridden Trakila wins Mayfowl Cup

KOLKATA RESULTS

The favourite Trakila, from the stables of Aashay Doctor and ridden by Trevor Patel, won the Mayfowl Cup, the feature event of the Kolkata races on Sunday.

1. Regal Connection Handicap - 1200M: Amalfitana (Gaurav Singh) 1; NRI Fantasy (Nikhil Naidu) 2; Godsend Divine (Mustakim Alam) 3; Horus The Great (Vishal Bunde) 4; WB: 2, 2, 1-1/4L; T: 1:15.21; TB: Rajender Reddy; Fav: NRI Fantasy.

2. Right Ahead Handicap -1600M: Fortune Warrior (Gaurav Singh) 1; Made In Heaven (Antony Raj) 2; Lineupandcollect (Vishal Bunde) 3; Dubai Prince (Sameer) 4; WB: 3/4, Lnk, 2-1/4L; T: 1:42.20; TB: Rajendeer Reddy; Fav: Soul Aquarian.

3. Arabian Prince Handicap - 2000M: Zarak (Imran Chisty) 1; Goodwill (Vishal Bunde) 2; Champagnesupernova (Trevor Patel) 3; Keitaro (Vinod Shinde) 4; WB: 8-1/2, Shd, 3-1/2L; T: 2:07.55; TB: S Waheed; Fav: Goodwill.

4. Ocean And Beyond Handicap - 1100M: Sky Force (Trevor Patel) 1; La Dominate (Vaibhav) 2; Roman Spirit (Tejeshwar) 3; Outlander (Neeraj Rawal) 4; WB: 2-1/4, Shd, 1-1/2L; T: 1:06.66; TB: Arti Doctor; Fav: Sky Force.

5. Mayfowl Cup - 1400M: Trakila (Trevor Patel) 1; Black Eagle (Gaurav Singh) 2; High Command (Imran Chisty) 3; King's Retreat (Vishal Bunde) 4; WB: 1-3/4, 3-1/4, 1L; T: 1:26.81; TB: Aashay Doctor; Fav: Trakila.

6. Cambridge Handicap (Div I) - 1400M: Clever Hans (Vikash Jaiswal) Varun 1; Noorie (Trevor Patel) 2; Dancing Queen (JH Arul) 3; Cool Daddy (Gaurav Singh) 4; NR: Midnight Blue; WB: Nk, 2, 1-1/2L; T: 1:27.45; TB: Vikash Jaiswal; Fav: Noorie.

7. Cambridge Handicap (Div II) - 1400M: Hermod (Vinod Shinde) 1; Amaze And Inspire (RS Bhati) 2; Veneno (Hasib Alam) 3; Queen Of Mafia (Mustakim Alam) 4; WB: 4-1/4, Shd, 3/4L; T: 1:27.14; TB: Rutherford Alford; Fav: Victorious Omen.

Bengaluru dividends

I race: Rs 53w; 15, 15, 22p; Fc: Rs 416; Q: Rs 189; Shp: Rs 51; Thp: Rs 55; Tri: Rs 2,294 & 1,053; Ex: Rs 8,651 & 2,966.

II race: Rs 75w; 15, 11, 21p; Fc: Rs 256; Q: Rs 98; Shp: Rs 35; Thp: Rs 40; Tri: Rs 1,499 & 883; Ex: Rs 9,948 & 8,527.

III race: Rs 45w; 11, 12, 11p; Fc: Rs 114; Q: Rs 60; Shp: Rs 23; Thp: Rs 35; Tri: Rs 202 & 62; Ex: Rs 980 & 700.

IV race: Rs 16w; 11, 24, 19p; Fc: Rs 173; Q: Rs 137; Shp: Rs 75; Thp: Rs 36; Tri: Rs 744 & 415: Ex: Rs 2,813 & 1,808.

V race: Rs 12w; 11, 17p; Fc: Rs 27; Q: Rs 22; Shp: Rs 22; Thp: Rs 24; Tri: Rs 27 & 10.

VI race: Rs 88w; 18, 12, 40p; Fc: Rs 432; Q: Rs 166; Shp: Rs 22; Thp: Rs 80; Tri: Rs 6,755 & 1,447; Ex: Rs 13,644 (c/o).

VII race: Rs 29w; 13, 21, 21p; Fc: Rs 310; Q: Rs 150; Shp: Rs 92; Thp: Rs 53; Tri: Rs 6,149 & 2,196; Ex: Rs 24,916 & 10,678.

Jackpot: Rs 10,007 (41). **Runner-up:** Rs 1,005 (175). **I treble:** Rs 1,486 (5). **II treble:** Rs 1,286 (14).

TENNIS BILLIE JEAN KING CUP

Dutch too good for India

Koevermans and Lamens overpower hosts' Shrivalli and Sahaja

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

Netherlands' Suzan Lamens returns during her win over India's Sahaja Yamalapalli in the Billie Jean King Cup at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium on Sunday. DH PHOTO/ PUSHKAR V

India wrapped up their Billie Jean King Cup playoff weekend with a 0-3 loss to the Netherlands, dropping both singles rubbers in straight sets at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium on Sunday.

Shrivalli Bhamidipatty lost 2-6, 4-6 to Anouk Koevermans while Sahaja Yamalapalli went down 2-6, 3-6 to Suzan Lamens to disappoint the home crowd, who came in strong numbers. The inconsequential doubles match was a one-sided affair too as Lamens paired up with Demi Schuurs to beat Ankita Raina and Prarthana Thombare 6-1, 6-1 to complete the drubbing.

With Slovenia having already clinched the group on Saturday, this was an inconsequential tie, but India still finished bottom of Group G after struggling to match the intensity and precision of their higher-ranked rivals.

The gap in rankings told its story early as Shrivalli (world No. 381) and Sahaja (No. 309) simply couldn't sustain pressure against Koevermans (No. 198) and Lamens (No. 87), even though both teams were playing purely for pride. India had their moments -- rare, spirited pockets that briefly energised the home supporters -- but neither match tilted long enough in blue's favour to threaten a turnaround.

The 23-year-old Shrivalli actually started with a bit of spark, unlike in her Saturday's three-set defeat to Tamara Zidansek. She went 1-0 up with a cracking forehand winner against her 21-year-old Dutch rival, raising hopes in the home stands but that didn't last.

Two untimely unforced errors on her serve opened the door for Koevermans, who pounced with a crisp volley after a weak second serve from the Indian.

Shrivalli had a golden chance to break back at 1-3, especially with Koevermans throwing in two double faults, but every time the rally dragged on, it was the Dutch player who dictated terms. Soon the set was over at 2-6 as Anouk shifted into full control, delighting the handful orange-clad fans with sharp serve-and-volley patterns.

The second set was more balanced Shrivalli fought hard, even taking a 2-1 lead with more intensity in her strokes. At 2-2, she had a look at a break point thanks to a couple of errors from Koevermans, but again, the Dutch player shut the door with a serve-and-volley one-two punch followed by an ace.

The contrast in their service games became obvious soon as Anouk kept firing aces and charging confidently to the net.

Results: India lt to Netherlands 0-3 (Shrivalli Bhamidipatty lt to Anouk Koevermans 2-6, 4-6; Sahaja Yamalapalli lt to Suzan Lamens 2-6, 3-6; Ankita Raina/Prarthana Thombare 1-6, 1-6).

Harikrishna shown the door

MANISHA MOHITE

Pentala Harikrishna was eliminated by 26-year-old Jose Martinez Alcantara in the second set of tie-break of the fifth round of the FIDE World Chess Cup in progress at Resort Rio in Goa.

Both their classical encounters had ended in draws and even the first set of two rapid tie-break games ended in deadlock. However, despite 39-year-old Harikrishna's experience, the faster time controls in the tie-break were expected to favour the younger Martinez who revels and excels in Speed Chess.

In other results, former World Rapid Champion Daniil Dubov, who ousted R Praggnanandhaa in the previous round was knocked out by Sam Shankland of USA, rated a few points below him.

Andrey Esipenko eliminated Alesksey Grebnev to reach the last eight. In more a battle of nerves, Alexander Donchenko missed many winning opportunities to finally prevail over Le Quang Liem of Vietnam to finally claim the last 8th quarter final spot.

22-year-old Arjun Erigaisi is now the only Indian amongst the 24 who began their journey in this 206 player, eight round knock-out event to advance to the quarterfinal. Arjun will be facing Chinese GM Wei Yi tomorrow in the 6th round, incidentally they are the only two surviving seeds from the top 10 ranked players here.

Martinez has been the giantkiller of this tournament, accounting for one of the hot favourites to win the title, Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

Round 5: Tie-Break Results: GM Pentala Harikrishna drew with GM Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara (Mex) 1-1; GM Sam Shankland (USA) bt GM Daniil Dubov (2-0); Alexander Dovchenko drew with GM Le Quang Liem (Vie) (1-1); GM Andrey Esipenko bt GM Aleksey Grebnev (1.5-0.5).

NAC boys crowned champs

BENGALURU, DHNS

Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre's boys' team emerged champions in the NRJ State Junior Water Polo Championships while their girls' squad suffered a heartbreaking defeat in the final at the Mysore University Swimming Pool in Mysuru on Sunday.

Backed by a fine performance from Adhyayan Shirole, who was later adjudged the best goalkeeper of the tournament, Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre defeated Star Aquatic 14-11 in a thrilling final where fortunes kept fluctuating.

Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre girls, meanwhile, went down 13-19 to Basavanagudi Aquatic Centre.

Results: Boys, finals: Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre bt Star Aquatic 14-11
Bronze medal playoff: Basavanagudi Aquatic Centre bt SwimLife 23-10.
Best goalkeeper: Adhyayan Shirole (Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre).

Girls, final: Basavanagudi Aquatic Centre bt Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre 19-13.
Bronze medal playoff: SwimLife bt Sea World 14-2.
Best goalkeeper: Pravda Malatesh (Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre).

Winners Nettakallappa Aquatic Centre boys team pose with the NRJ state junior water polo championship trophy in Mysuru on Sunday. (From left) STANDING: Iresh Shenoy, Adhyayan Shirole, Inesh Shenoy, Chinmay Pai, C Anandavel (coach), Sujan (coach), SS Sheshadri, Nihar Rajesh, Dhyan M Naidu, Ishaan Shenoy, Akshay Krishna. KNEELING: Aditya Katti, Krishal Akshith, M Bhooshith C Gowda, Sudiksh Deepak, Mahaan Gowda.

Advani, Damani in knockout rounds

BENGALURU, DHNS : Ace Indian cueist Pankaj Advani and Brijesh Damani advanced to the knockout rounds with wins each in their respective groups of the World Cup of Snooker in Muscat on Sunday.

Advani, owner of 28 world titles across cue sports disciplines, outclassed Hesham Alsaqer of Bahrain 3-0 for his second win in Group M. He had breaks of 74 and 56 in his lop-sided victory. Advani had earlier beaten Oman's Hussain Allawati 3-0 in his opening match.

Results (Indians unless mentioned):
Group H: Michal Szubarczyk (Pol) bt Dhvaj Haria 3-2 (59-33, 51-72, 22-54, 70-14, 66 (61) -17); Chi Kin Yeung (Chn) bt Haria 3-2 (54-43, 49-64, 6-81, 60-45, 56-26).
Group J: Brijesh Damani bt Hasanain Alsultani (US) 3-1 (76 (62) -28, 62-14, 54-55, 93-4); Damani bt Ihab Al-Salih (Irq) 3-0 (85 (74) -1, 73-64, 72-29).
Group K: Hussain Khan bt Ahmed Nizam Uddin (Ban) 3-1 (120 (64) -7, 62-26, 56-65, 56-20); Firas Kamil Shaba (Irq) bt Hussain 3-2 (63-29, 78 (56) -29, 28-91, 27-67 (50), 69-40).
Group M: Pankaj Advani bt Hesham Alsaqer (Bah) 3-0 (93 (74) -32, 96 (56) -4, 75-52); Advani bt Husain Allawati (Oman) 3-0 (67-2, 78 (78) -1, 64-37).
Group R: Aditya Mehta bt Qasim Albalushi (Oman) 3-0 (84-12, 62-54, 73-6).

Carlos Alcaraz (left) and Jannik Sinner. AFP/ REUTERS

Final Alcaraz-Sinner finale for the season

TURIN, AFP: Carlos Alcaraz said Saturday that Jannik Sinner is the favourite to retain his ATP Finals title at home after the new world No. 1 set up a blockbuster finale with his Italian rival in the prestigious season-ending tournament.

Alcaraz beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-2, 6-4 in Turin to set up the title match with Sinner all tennis fans wanted to see after a series of thrilling battles between the pair this year.

The Spaniard has had the better of his clashes with Sinner 10-5.

Sinner, a 7-5, 6-2 winner over Alex de Minaur on Saturday, is favourite to lift the trophy on Sunday in front of his home fans.

Gill discharged from hospital

KOLKATA, PTI: India captain Shubman Gill has been discharged from the hospital in which he was receiving treatment for a neck injury sustained during the opening Test against South Africa.

Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) president Sourav Ganguly on Sunday went to see Gill at the Woodlands Multispeciality Hospital, after India suffered a defeat

Gill, who suffered the injury while batting on the second day of the game, was ruled out of the first Test before the start of the third day's play and was not available to bat in the second innings when India were shot out for 93.

Gaikwad, Rana shine in India A romp

RAJKOT, PTI: Ruturaj Gaikwad made an unbeaten fifty following Harshit Rana's three-wicket burst as India A crushed South Africa A by nine wickets in the second unofficial ODI here on Sunday.

The victory helped India A to take an insurmountable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Pacer Rana (3/21) and left-arm spinner Nishant Sindhu (4/16) helped India bowl out the visitors for a lowly 132 in 20.3 overs, and then scaled down the target in 27.5 overs while posting 135 for one.

Brief scores: South Africa A: 132 all out in 30.3 overs (Rivaldo Moonsamy 33, Harshit Rana 3/21, Nishant Sandhu 4/18) lt to India A: 135/1 in 27.5 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 68 n.o., Tilak Varma 29 n.o., Abhishek Sharma 32).

Karnataka call the shots on Day 1

BENGALURU, DHNS: Eesa Hakeem Puthige and Rathan BR bagged three wickets apiece as Karnataka called the shots against Uttarakhand on the opening day of the BCCI-Cooch Behar Trophy game at Alur grounds here on Sunday.

Asked to take first strike by Karnataka skipper Manikanth Shivanand, Uttarakhand never got going on a largely cool day, getting bowled out for 202 in 81.2 overs. While Eesa (3/34) and Rathan (3/37) took three wickets each, Vaibhav Sharma (2/52) and Akshath Prabhakar (2/53) scalped two apiece to ensure the noose was always tight around the visitors' neck.

Brief scores: Uttarakhand: 202 all out in 81.2 overs (Ayush Deswal 25, Nishu Patel 39, Akash Kumar 30 n.o.; Vaibhav Sharma 2-52, Eesa Hakeem Puthige 3-34, Akshath Prabhakar 2-53, Rathan BR 3-37) vs Karnataka: 16/1 in 5 overs.

Harpreet in line for WC medal

CAIRO, PTI : Veteran Indian pistol marksman Harpreet Singh kept himself in contention for a medal in the men's 25m centre fire event, finishing second after the precision round at the ISSF World Championships, here on Sunday.

The 44-year-old shot 291 in the 'precision' round.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

Asia Cup Rising Stars: Sri Lanka vs Hong Kong **(3 pm)**, Bangladesh vs Afghanistan **(8 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network.**

Ranji Trophy: Madhya Pradesh vs Kerala, Tamil Nadu vs Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh vs Chhattisgarh **(day 2, 9:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL

World Cup Qualifiers: Germany vs Slovakia, Montenegro vs Croatia, Netherlands vs Lithuania **(1:15 am, Tuesday)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network.**

BOXING

World Boxing Cup Finals: Day 2 **(1 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network.**

Off-spinner bags eight wickets in the game as South Africa script sensational win

INDIA DEALT A Harmer blow

MADHU JAWALI
KOLKATA, DHNS

An eerie silence enveloped Eden Gardens the moment Mohammed Siraj edged Keshav Maharaj to Aiden Markram at slip. Until that last piece of play, the iconic venue was a cauldron of cacophony with over 35,000 crowd rooting for an Indian victory till the last minute. With Shubman Gill declared unfit to bat with a stiff neck, the opening Test ended a few minutes into the extended middle session.

An ecstatic South Africa, who were clear underdogs, broke into unbridled celebration to mark their first Test win in 15 years on Indian soil.

Set a target of 124 after South Africa, overnight 93/7, dragged their second innings to 153 all out in 53 overs, India failed the spin test once again by crashing to 93 all out with Simon Harmer adding another 4/21 to go with his first innings haul of 4/30. Their lead spinner Keshav Maharaj, who endured an underwhelming outing, had something to cheer about after a counting for India's last two wickets off successive balls.

Only Washington Sundar (31) showed the gumption to fight it out on what was a difficult wicket to bat on from day 1 while Dhruv Jurel, who played as a specialist batter based on his recent form, should be disappointed with himself for the manner he got out in the second innings immediately after lunch.

While wickets have tumbled like a house of cards in this match, KL Rahul and Washington in the first and Temba Bavuma (59) and Corbin Bosch in the second had shown even small partnerships can prove significant in low-scoring matches. Where India had just two 18-plus stands in the second innings, South Africa had four with the 62 runs that Bavuma added with Bosch and Harmer for the eighth and ninth wickets turning out to be critical in South Africa winning and India losing.

India struggled hard to get their first wicket before Bumrah relieved some tension with the dismissal of Bosch. Siraj was brought in rather late into the attack but got the job done in a jiffy with two wickets in as many overs to end South Africa's lower-order resistance. After Bavuma survived a close call for LBW with the help of DRS, Siraj broke Harmer's off-stump into two halves before removing Maharaj with a toe-crusher off the last ball of his second over.

India's chase was always going to be tricky, especially with a batter short in Gill. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal fell for a four-ball duck after being nicely set up by Marco Jansen (2/15) who bowled his first two deliveries wide outside off and sent down the next ball down the leg.

South Africa's Simon Harmer celebrates after dismissing India's Kuldeep Yadav on the third day of the first Test at the Eden Gardens on Sunday. AFP

The gangling seamer bowled fourth on the fourth-stump line, eliciting an edge from the left-hander to draw first blood. The pacer then got the big one in the next over with a steep bounce from a back of length catching Rahul by surprise and his attempted slash only resulting in a top edge to Kyle Verreynne as India went into lunch on a shaky 10/2.

Upon resumption, Jurel essayed an absolute rank bad shot that resulted in a catch in the deep and pushed India's chase into a deeper crisis. Ravindra Jadeja appeared to steady the innings with his typical batting smarts but took one the full by Harmer while attempting a sweep. Rishabh Pant never looked the part and when Washington poked one to slip, the chase was all but over. Axar provided some excitement with a couple of sixes off Maharaj but eventually miscued one shot. Bavuma covered a significant ground running backwards to complete an excellent catch under pressure.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA (I INNINGS): 159 ALL OUT
INDIA (I INNINGS): 189 ALL OUT
SOUTH AFRICA (II INNINGS; O/N: 93/7):

Rickelton lbw Kuldeep 11 (23b, 28m, 1x4)
Markram c Jurel b Jadeja 4 (23b, 33m)
Mulder c Rahul b Jadeja 11 (30b, 34m, 1x4)
Bavuma (not out) 55 (136, 188m, 4x4)
de Zorzi c Jurel b Jadeja 2 (2b, 2m)
Stubbs b Jadeja 5 (18b, 26m)
Verreynne b Axar 9 (16b, 17m, 1x4)
Jansen c Rahul b Kuldeep 13 (16b, 1x6)
Bosch b Bumrah 25 (37b, 47m, 2x4, 1x6)
Harmer b Siraj 7 (20b, 31m)
Maharaj lbw Siraj 0 (3b, 4m)
Extras (LB-11) 11
Total (all out, 54 overs) 153

Fall of wickets: 1-18 (Rickelton), 2-25 (Markram), 3-38 (Mulder), 4-40 (de Zorzi), 5-60 (Stubbs), 6-75 (Verreynne), 7-91 (Jansen), 8-135 (Bosch), 9-153 (Harmer).

Bowling: Bumrah 10-2-24-1, Axar 14-0-36-1, Kuldeep 8-1-30-2, Jadeja 20-3-50-4, Siraj 2-0-2-2.

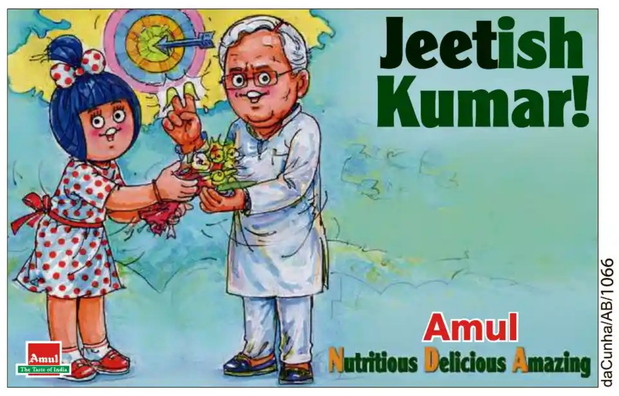
INDIA (II INNINGS):

Jaiswal c Verreynne b Jansen 0 (4b, 2m)
Rahul c Verreynne b Jansen 1 (7b, 10m)
Washington c Harmer b Markram 31 (92b, 123m, 2x4)
Jurel c Bosch b Harmer 13 (34b, 49m, 3x4)
Pant c & b Harmer 2 (13b, 21m)
Jadeja lbw Harmer 18 (26b, 31m, 2x4)
Axar c Bavuma b Maharaj 26 (17b, 31m, 1x4, 2x6)
Kuldeep lbw Harmer 1 (13b, 11m)
Siraj c Markram b Maharaj 0 (1b, 1m)
Bumrah (not out) 0 (4b, 9m)
Gill (absent hurt)
Extras (LB-1) 1
Total (all out, 35 overs) 93

Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Jaiswal), 2-1 (Rahul), 3-33 (Jurel), 4-38 (Pant), 5-65 (Jadeja), 6-72 (Washington), 7-77 (Kuldeep), 8-93 (Axar), 9-93 (Siraj).

Bowling: Jansen 7-3-15-2, Harmer 14-4-21-4, Maharaj 9-1-37-2, Bosch 2-0-14-0, Markram 3-0-5-1.

Result: South Africa won by 30 runs.
Series: SA lead 2-Test series 1-0.
PoM: Simon Harmer.



South Africa successfully defended a fourth innings target of 124 which would be the lowest target defended by any visiting team in Tests in India and the second-lowest fourth innings target defended by any team in Tests in India.

DEADLY EDEN

Lowest 4th innings targets defended in Tests in India

Target	By	Vs	Venue	Year
107	Ind	Aus	Mumbai	2004
124	SA	Ind	Kolkata	2025
147	NZ	Ind	Mumbai	2024
170	Ind	SA	Ahmedabad	1996

Lowest 4th innings targets defended by South Africa in Tests

Target	Vs	Venue	Year
117	Aus	Sydney	1994
124	Ind	Kolkata	2025
146	Pak	Faisalabad	1997
177	SL	Kandy	2000

Best Figures for South African spinner in Tests against India

Figures	By	Venue	Year
8-51	Simon Harmer	Kolkata	2025
8-139	Paul Adams	Kanpur	1996
7-93	Nicky Boje	Bengaluru	2000
6-71	Imran Tahir	Mohali	2015

- South Africa's 30-run win in Kolkata would be their first Test win in India since their innings and 6-runs win in Nagpur in February 2010. Prior to the win in Kolkata, they had lost 7 of their last 8 Tests in India and drawn one Test match.
- With the win in Kolkata, Temba Bavuma becomes the first captain in Test history to register 10 wins in a player's first 11 Tests as captain.
- Bavuma joins an elite club of captains who did not lose a Test in their first 11 Tests.

Compiled by Arun Gopalakrishnan

Test results under Gambhir continue to take hit

MADHU JAWALI
KOLKATA, DHNS

Gautam Gambhir's CV as India's Head Coach looks formidable at first glance, yet it tells only part of the story. India have sparkled in white-ball cricket, but their Test performances have struggled to keep pace. Since taking over from Rahul Dravid, Gambhir has delivered multiple limited-overs series wins against England, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, along with titles in the Champions Trophy (ODI) and the Asia Cup (T20).

The red-ball journey, however, has not followed the same script. Whether it is a question of skill, temperament or both, the Delhiite has not been able to inspire similar consistency in Tests. Apart from victories against lower-ranked Bangladesh and the West Indies, India have stumbled in one home series and one away series, losing to New Zealand by 3-0 and Australia by 3-1, and settling for a 2-2 draw in the five-Test contest against England.

The latest setback against South Africa in just eight sessions at the Eden Gardens on Saturday, pushed his tally to nine losses in 18 Tests.

On Sunday, after his fourth loss in six home Tests, Gambhir faced the media. His answers created more puzzles than clarity. He wanted the batters to show greater application on turning tracks, yet he also suggested that the squad lacked experience in those conditions.

"It is not like there is a lot of experience in this dressing room, in the batting unit, if you see," he began.

It is worth checking the numbers. Ravindra Jadeja entered the South Africa Test with 87 matches. KL Rahul has played 65, Rishabh Pant 47 and Yashasvi Jaiswal 26. Washington Sundar and Axar Patel, with 15 and 13 Tests respectively, may have fewer caps but can hardly be considered novices. And that is India's core batting unit even before factoring in captain Shubman Gill.

So the inexperience angle does not quite add up.

Gambhir continued, "More than the skill, in Test cricket, mental toughness is more important. Regardless of how much turn there is, the first 10-15 minutes are important. Once you see that off, you get used to it. So it is the ability to absorb pressure." Admitting that he had requested the kind of surface India got, he had to defend the pitch and argued that it held no demons.

"You call it a turning track, (but) you see who took the wickets? Majority went to seamers," he said. Fact check: Spinners took 22 and seamers 16.

"If on a so-called turning track, if you get out to seamers, I don't consider it as a difficult wicket. It was a wicket where your technique would be challenged, mental toughness and more importantly the temperament to grind and bat long. If you attack, it is different. The ones who defended, whose defence was solid, made runs. We have played on such tracks before too."

His contradictions surfaced again. While citing past examples to defend the pitch, he dismissed comparisons across eras.

"We can't compare eras. That used to be the time when there was no DRS," he replied when asked if today's batters lack the skills to handle spin.

Gambhir closed the debate on conditions with a final assertion: "So, whatever we get in Guwahati, I think we've got the guys to deliver in any condition and on any surface as well."

And so the fundamental question remains unresolved. Is India struggling due to a shortage of skills, a shortage of temperament or simply because the pitches are too demanding?

The Indian team's performances in Test cricket under head coach Gautam Gambhir (right) continues to flounder with the defeat against South Africa. PTI

Second Test: **Nov 22-26** (Guwahati)

Smaran, Nair make the right noises

Karnataka reach 298/5 at stumps on the first day against Chandigarh

BENGALURU, DHNS

Smaran R's (110 n.o., 184b, 11x4, 1x6) fourth first-class century in his 13th game and Karun Nair's (95, 164b, 12x4, 1x6) 39th first-class fifty carried Karnataka to 298 for five at stumps on the opening day of their fifth Elite Group B fixture against Chandigarh at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium in Hubballi on Sunday.

The in-form duo of Smaran and Nair combined to add 119 runs for the fourth wicket after Chandigarh controlled the first phase of play in the morning after being asked to bowl.

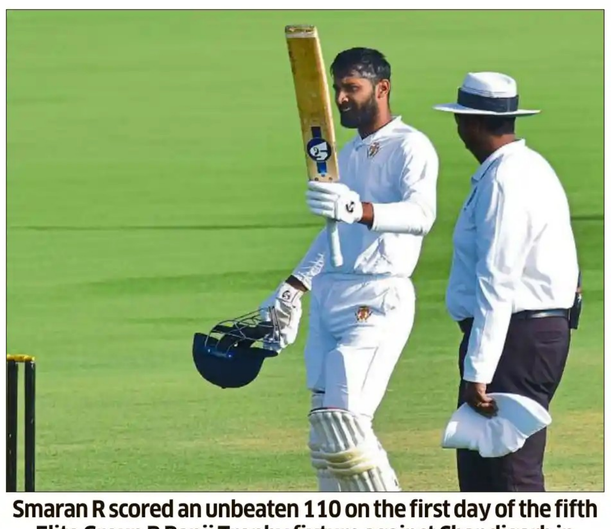
At the close, however, Karnataka were in control of proceedings as the promising 22-year-old took advantage of the platform that was set and saw the day through alongside the technically sound Shreyas Gopal (38 n.o., 80b, 4x4).

After winning the toss and opting to bat, last match's centurion Mayank Agarwal's (9, 20b, 2x4) stay was short as Jagjit Singh hit the right channels and then the stumps.

While his partner Aneesh KV (2, 26b), who has been flirting with form after coming in for Nikin Jose, endured another failure and had to make the long walk back, giving Rajangad Bawa (1/41) his first and only wicket of the day.

Under-pressure Shrijith KL (17, 53b, 1x4), who was in desperate need of some consistency, failed to kick on yet again as Nishank Shukla trapped him in front in the 27th over.

At one point, Karnataka were three down with just 64 on the board and were in need of some batting stability. Nair and Smaran put their hands up and provided just that.



Smaran R scored an unbeaten 110 on the first day of the fifth Elite Group B Ranji Trophy fixture against Chandigarh in Hubballi on Sunday. DH PHOTO/GOVINDRAJ JAVALI

SCOREBOARD

KARNATAKA (I Innings): KV Aneesh c Nikhil b Bawa 2 (26b), Mayank Agarwal b Jagjit 9 (20b, 2x4), Shrijith KL lbw b Nishunk 17 (53b, 1x4), Karun Nair lbw Taranpreet 95 (164b, 12x4, 1x6), Smaran R (batting) 110 (184b, 11x4, 1x6); Abhinav Manohar b Nishunk 11 (14b), Shreyas Gopal (batting) 38 (80b, 4x4). Extras (B-9, LB-2, NB-1) 12.
TOTAL (for 5 wkts, 90 overs) 298.
Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Agarwal), 2-13 (Aneesh), 3-64 (Shrijith), 4-183 (Nair), 5-210 (Manohar).
Bowling: Jagjit Singh 13-3-42-1, Raj Bawa 12-4-41-1, Vishu Kashyap 28-6-68-0, Nishunk Birla 24-1-85-2, Taranpreet Singh 13-0-47-1
Other Group B brief scores: At Mullanpur: Maharashtra: 275/5 in 88 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 133, Prithvi Shaw 74; Gurnoor Brar 2-86, Mayank Markande 2-35) vs Punjab.
At Rajkot: Saurashtra: 317/4 in 90 overs (Harvik Desai 45, Jay Gohil 68, Prerak Mankad 88 n.o., Arpit Vasavada 81) vs Goa
At Indore: Kerala: 246/7 in 90 overs (Abhishek Nair 47, Baba Aparajith 81 n.o., Abijith Praveen 60; Saransh Jain 3-38, Arshad Khan 3-45) vs Madhya Pradesh.

Portugal punch World Cup ticket by thrashing Armenia 9-1

PORTO, AFP: Portugal crushed Armenia 9-1 without suspended talisman Cristiano Ronaldo to clinch qualification for the 2026 World Cup finals on Sunday.

Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes and Paris Saint-Germain's Joao Neves both scored hat-tricks as Roberto Martinez's side racked up a huge win in Porto to top Group F.

Renato Veiga got the ball rolling for Portugal, with Goncalo Ramos and Francisco Conceicao also on the scoresheet.

After a draw in Hungary in October and a surprise defeat at Ireland on Thursday in which Ronaldo was sent off, Portugal wrapped up qualification at the third attempt in their final group match.

India A go down to Pak Shaheens

DOHA, PTI: An inexplicable batting collapse saw fancied India A lose to Pakistan Shaheens by eight wickets in the Asia Cup Rising Stars tournament here on Sunday.

Opting to field after winning the toss, Pakistan Shaheens staged a remarkable comeback to bowl out India A for 136 after they were cruising along at 91 for three in the 10th over.

Brief scores: India A: 136 all out in 19 overs (Vaibhav Suryavanshi 45, Naman Dhir 35; Shahid Aziz 3-24, Saad Masood 2-31, Maaz Sadaqat 2-12) lt to Pakistan Shaheens: 137/2 in 13.2 overs (Maaz Sadaqat 79 n.o.). **Result:** Pakistan Shaheens won by 8 wickets. **PoM:** Maaz Sadaqat. **India A's next match:** vs Oman A (Nov 18).

Preeti makes punchy return as boxers shine

GREATER NOIDA, DHNS: Returning after a year away from international action and a draining battle with Hepatitis A, Preeti Pawar marked her comeback in style, securing a medal for India at the World Boxing Cup Finals here on Sunday.

The 22-year-old defeated fellow Hangzhou Asian Games bronze medallist Nigina Uktamova of Uzbekistan by unanimous decision to move to the semifinals of the women's 54kg category.

Shimoga Queens lift QPL S2 title

BENGALURU, DHNS

The curtains came down on the vibrant and high-energy KNS Queens Premier League (QPL) Season 2 with the Shimoga Queens emerging as the overall champions after delivering a commanding performance across multiple sports.

The team clinched the coveted trophy by securing victories in 8 out of 12 games, showcasing consistency, depth and spirited teamwork throughout the week-long sporting festival.

The grand closing ceremony at the Koramangala Indoor Stadium sparkled with star presence as Sandalwood Queen Ramya, the official face of QPL Season 2, took the stage for the award presentation. Ramya was joined by former MLA Sowmya Reddy, who shared the stage during the trophy handover, adding to the celebratory atmosphere. Transport and Muzrai Minister Ramalinga Reddy also attended the ceremony, lending government support to the growing women-centric sporting platform.

The Shimoga Queens, led by captain Bhavana Rao, fielded an impressive and well-balanced team. Players including Dr Akshata Kulkarni, Priyanka Kamath, Spoorthy Gowda, Shruthi Venkatesh, Geetha P, Surekha Kulkarni, Vindhya Rangaswamy, Raniya Shruthi, Manya Gowda, Manasa Guruswami, Gamana G Gowda, Ragashree BG, Shruthi C, Vaishnavi B and Rakshika Shetty contributed significantly across disciplines.

The victorious Shimoga Queens team poses with the KNS Queens Premier League (QPL) Season 2 overall championship trophy.

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